Kadokawa Fantastic Novels

盜賊神技

在異世界盜取技能～

2

Asuka Kei

飛鳥けい

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Translated by Raisingthedead

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Read Riot Grasper Chapter 1

2nd Volume, 1st Chapter【The Sword and Magic】

2nd volume is now underway.
It is scheduled to be updated every 2-3 days.

※The author has found out the difference between the magic power and mana. 1st volume, wherein magic was almost never used, is being fine tuned. A prompt revision is being made. *Sweats* *sweats* *sweats*
※※Revision done……? Done.
Part revised——1st volume, 1st chapter: In the explanation of the characteristics of the races, it was mentioned that the elves possess plenteous magic power which has now been changed to magic aptitude. The revision has been effected.
Moving on, a revision has been effected in the Magic Power Conversion skill, too, which Lim possesses. The name of the skill remains unchanged; however, in the description, magic power → mana.
I apologize.
Basically, I plan on developing the storyline based on the details in this 1st chapter of 2nd volume. (Author's note)

——5th month, 5th week, the day of the Origin. Rainy.

Upon the sound of the early morning bells, I got my upper body up while rubbing my drowsy eyes.
Last night, I stayed up a little too late.
I understand partying and all; however, why did they have to serve alcohol to a minor?

Although I had already guessed that there's no age limit on drinking in this world, Arnold-san and Bays-san went overboard with doing as they pleased.

Obliging to their request, when Dario-san brought a liquor distilled from Merva Barley, which grows in this region, I felt as if something had started to break.

With Sheena-san having disappeared all too soon and Lim having gone upstairs, upon Arnold-san urging her, to a room at Feeder Pops' paid for by him, only male attendants were left.

Thereafter, I was forced, albeit partly, to keep them company. Miraculously, however, I wasn't dead drunk even after drinking for god knows how long.
Actually, it was my first time drinking, so I didn't know as to what it feels like to be drunk; however, my mind was clear.

Glutted with euphoria, you desire delectation; that's what I thought would feel like to be drunk.

「Is this……perhaps the effect of Abnormal Status Resistance……?」

Unable to shirk my conscience, I was lonely in company of the two the mind of whom had broken down. Its taste being delicious was the only salvage.
Taking the tasty food and the delicious liquor into account, it can be taken as a gain.

After descending downstairs to the first floor and resuscitating my swollen eyes with the well water, I returned to the dining area.

「Ou, Seiji. The congratulatory party last night was so fun. Although……you were relatively more composed even after drinking so much.」
「Eeh, even I was surprised.」

By the way, Dario-san didn't take even a drop of alcohol in.
Saying「I'm at work,」he declined the offer of the two to drink. He toasted merely with fruit juice.

「——Oh, Lim is up, too. Do you two want to have breakfast together?」
「Good morning. Umm, Papa……」
「I-Is something the matter?」

Don't tell me, excessive intake of alcohol!? Oh shit——

「——Today, he won't be able to move before noon.」

……Un, okay.
Calm down, me. Take a deep breath.

That cool figure who stayed throughout the night by Lim's side at the inn in Pascam.
That gallant figure who, without looking back, went ahead to fight the Blood Ogres, urging Lim and me to run away.

I can't forget that figure.

「……Because he drank a little too much last night, isn't it better to let him sleep?」

After having breakfast with Lim, I thought over today's plan.
Because Jig-san said that he would be done with making my sword by this evening, I'd better stay inside the town.

The quests within the scope of rank D, which can be completed within the town, are scarce to begin with. Considering the rain on top of that, it's a big ask.

That being the case, I'd rather visit the place which I have been thinking of visiting for some time: the library.
Situated in the centre of Merville Town, it's a public facility which is accessible upon the payment of fee.
Although the money I received from Jig-san as a congratulatory gift had dwindled considerably down due to the food and drinks last night, I still had some left.

What I want to study about the most in the library is magic.
Although I'm immensely curious about the magic skills, regrettably, I have nil knowledge about magic. Even the basic concept doesn't exist in me.

As for the martial art skills, although I waxed at handling weapons via stealing skills, I already had the concept of weapons – sword, spear, axe, etc. – to some extent.
Even though I now possess Sword Arts, I have naturally heard of『swinging the sword and killing the enemy』in the stories.

However, I haven't heard of using magic in a 'real' story.
What is magic? What can you do with magic?

I will obviously find it out after stealing the magic skills; however, there's no harm in learning about it beforehand.

Based on Arnold-san's past conduct, Lim returned to their room and waited for her father to wake up.

I returned to my room, put on a hooded overcoat (black) to protect myself from rain and left Feeder Pops'.
I set out in the the central direction. There exists a large square in the centre of the town. Normally, the aisles of the stalls bustle with people; however, unfortunately, it was raining today.
Although the tents set up for business could be found hither and thither, they were essentially unfrequented.
After walking for a while, a magnificent building entered my line of sight.

In this town, the most gaudy building would be the Town Lord's mansion. It's a chalk palace……no, chalk mansion.
Merville is a town where commerce thrives. Many merchants, artisans and craftsmen run their businesses; however, never did I say it was a free town.

Since it's situated in the territory of Lechelle Kingdom, it's governed by the titled nobility.
People pay the tax to the Town Lord, the Town Lord pays the tax to the King; this is somehow an accepted arrangement.

Adventurers, however, are exempted from paying the tax.
Actually, no. Rather than exemption, there's a deduction from the reward at the completion of a quest.
Therefore, an adventurer can travel between the countries without being tied to the chain called tax.
However, since the social status of an adventurer may be revoked if they don't receive any quest within a prescribed period, it's an acceptable argument.
Oh well. It's a great race which the present I is unrelated to, so I cut the thought short.

——I arrived at the library, paid the 200 Dalas entrance fee and went into the building.
The books being valuable treasure, I was warned of damaging the books which would result

in additional compensation. For it wasn't pretty inside my pouch, I intended to handle the books with extra care.

Inside was a peculiar blend of the smell of paper and the odor of ink……there was a whiff of dust, too, in the blend that could make one nostalgic, creating a soothing ambience.

During the exam, I was surrounded by textbooks, making me hate the smell of paper and ink. This time, however, since I was pursuing a subject of interest, the impression in my consciousness had changed.

「Err, where are the magic related books kept?」

After asking the librarian, I turned my steps to the bookshelf.
After having nearly gotten distracted by the various bookshelves en route, I finally arrived at the destination.

From the bookshelf which seemed to especially be for the picture books, I was picking the titles up, which attracted my attention, and putting them back.

『An Elf and a Forest Bear-san』
『A Dragonewt's Melancholy』
『A Truly Scary Demon's Fairytale』

And so on. Why on Iris would someone draw such a thing?

Moving on, I pulled myself back together and searched for the books on magic.
There weren't that many magic related books, though. The collection could merely fill a step of the bookshelf.
However, it was enough for me to decline if someone asked me to read them all.
Then, I casually stretched my hand to pick a book up the title of which was——

『A Guide to the Principles of Elemental Magic that Even a Green Caterpillar can Understand』

Although it piqued my interest……it was so thick that my heart broke halfway through.
However, considering the title……the ease of understanding should make the thickness manageable.

I moved to the reading space and commenced the study.

『——Preface: Before reading further, it is recommended to please assess if you possess adequate aptitude in elemental magic.』

So it says, but.
How do I assess?
Silently, I turned the page over.

『As for the aptitude in elemental magic——the atmosphere of this world is filled with an

ingredient called《Mana》which is the source of magic. Magic is an act of manifesting a phenomenon by refining mana.』

Mana, eh?
I can't stop myself from *wakuwaku* trembling with excitement.

『Let's assess your aptitude in Fire Magic. If you're alive, you must be quite familiar with a thing called fire. Fire in a hearth, fire in a stove, a bonfire……various such instances come to mind.』

Assessing the aptitude probably means ascertaining the existence of a skill.
That being the case, because I plan on stealing the magic skills anyway, there's no need for me to assess the aptitude.
However, if weapons can be wielded without possessing the martial art skills, why can't magic be invoked without possessing the magic skills?
Since it seems fascinating, I'll give it a go.

『Take a big, deep breath and suck the air into your body. Imagine fire. Draw a simple, easy image of fire in your mind. Concentrate on your fingertip——』

Imagine fire……huh?

A true flame that can illuminate the abyss. A hellish flame that can overshadow the hellfire.
A blinding flame that can burn the eyes of the beholder.
That can scorch everyone. That can melt everything. That can turn anyone who obstructs its path into nothingness.
Having sucking the air in until it ran out, I imagined an infinitely soaring inferno!
Blazing on my fingertip.

……

……

『Were you able to? For caution's sake, let's move on and assess your aptitude in other elements of magic. The next is Water Magic.』

Silently, I turned the page over.
Oh well. Whatever it is. Isn't……it?

『The method is same. Imagine water in your mind and take a death breath.』

For sure. I'll prevail this time for sure.

Pure water that flows gently and kindly.
Bestowing the fields with blessings. Streaming holy water that heals the body and cleanses it.
Contrary to its gentle side, a river may flood and tyrannically wash everything away.
Showing the might of its power to anyone that stands in its way.

I imagined my fingertip overflowing.

……Why? Why isn't anything happening!?
So, is this shit meaningless unless I possess a magic skill, after all?

Thereafter, I tried Wind, Earth, Dark and Light one after another; however, nothing happened at all.
Still.
In this world, the days are associated to these elements.
The day of the Origin is still left.

『With this, the assessment of the aptitude is over.』

What……the.

『If you have the aptitude in all six elements, you're extremely lucky. There's a possibility that you have the aptitude in Origin Magic. Origin Magic is literally the magic that governs the source《Origin》of everything. Even in their dreams, one cannot use magic of all six elements. Further details have been provided later.』

Disregarding my feelings, the book lined those words up indifferently.
It's reasonable, though, for it's a book.

『Although it's extremely regrettable, if you have assessed the aptitude……yet you don't have the aptitude in any of the elements——please close the book. Anymore would be a waste of time.』

『You're not a green caterpillar.』

……Whoever wrote this book, come oooout.
I'll chop you up!

My trembling right hand was curled into a fist. My left hand was holding it back.
『If you damage a book, you'll have to compensate』——those words echoed inside my head.

「Fuu……haa……」

Taking deep breaths, sucking useless mana into my body during the process, I regained my composure.

『——Now then, if you have the aptitude, don't be hasty for you're merely at the stage of chrysalis. The next section explains how to practise mana refining.』

Thereafter, for a long time, I looked over the text.
Here's the summary.

The elemental magic isn't the manifestation of a phenomenon through chanting a spell. Fire in case Fire Magic, water in case of Water Magic, so on and so forth——the accurate

expression would be the materialization of a practitioner's image through converting mana.

Nevertheless, the practitioner can associate a name to the manifestation of a phenomenon ——magic, that is to say, in order to draw a clear image.

For instance,『Flame, burn the enemy』.
If I called that out, the image would be vague……resultanly, a sloppy flamethrower-esque flame would fly toward the enemy.

『Ball of Fire (Fireball), burn the enemy』

If I called that out, consistent to my image, a highspeed ball of flame would soar toward the enemy.
Spear of Flame (Fire Lance), too; any would do. As long as it clarifies the image, one can name it by and for themselves.
Doing so, a practitioner can manifest a phenomenon with relative ease, it seems.
If one doesn't feel the need to shout, they're most welcome.

To what extent a practitioner can convert mana in the atmosphere to manifest a phenomenon, as explained earlier, is called mana refining.
Mana sucked into the body is an explosive while the body of a practitioner can be considered a converter that converts mana in the atmosphere into magic.

This quantity of conversion decides as to what extent can magic be used.
As for heavy flood……to manifest such a magic, an enormous quantity of mana needs to be converted.
Therefore, the converter of a novice practitioner can't possibly invoke such a magic.

Most likely……the quantity that can be converted is directly related to the skill Lv.

Sure enough, the contents of magic I imagined were excessively grand.
With the insignificant quantity of mana converted, there was no way for the magic to invoke.
Without any magic skill, if I imagined fire on a matchstick, something might happen…… however, I have no intention of wasting time on that.

Oh well. So, elemental magic will vary from one practitioner to another.
There will be a difference in the quantity converted, of course. Moreover, the magic manifested through a practitioner's image will be multifarious.
The other day, when the healer used Light Magic to heal Arnold-san's injury, he had such an image of light.
If I could, I would shoot a laser beam of light.

Well, that's the gist of it.

By the way, Origin Magic seems to be almighty.
There's a possibility of creating a compound element by combining all six elements of magic.
It's all a dream.

However, that said, the conversion of mana is considered difficult. It supposedly takes time for a practitioner to succeed.
It's difficult to increase the skill Lv……is that it?

At the end of the magic textbook, I saw this,『You're close to eclosion. Be a splendid artist and flap to the sky,』written and closed the book.

Just because you wanted to say this, you came up with such a title?
Couldn't you draw the analogy with a bird or something?

Oh well. Since it's quite easy to understand, it can be deemed acceptable……it's about time.

When I gazed outside the window, the shadow cast by the sunlight had lengthened. I'd better be leaving for Jig-san's place.
I put the book back on the shelf……uh……h

「Oh, this textbook is a part of the green caterpillar series, huh? He, there's one on Spirit Magic, too……」

I opened the book to browse just a little.

『——Preface: Before reading further, it is recommended to confirm whether you're an elf. If not, please close the book.』

——Before wasting another moment, I closed the book.

——Facing Jig-san's shop in the Industrial District, I shoved anything magic to a corner of my mind. With my heart throbbing, I stepped into the shop.

「Ou, you're here, huh? If you came for your sword——here.」

I subconsciously let out a breath.

What Jig-san brought from inside his workshop was a sword with the dull lustre of obsidian. Running down a part of the scantily curved jet black sword blade was an organic red veined pattern.
Is this aesthetic pattern a vestige of the red horn which turned black? Or, is it the result of Jig-san's craftsmanship?
Such an admirable beauty……it's fascinating.

「——……Hey…..you listening? Hey!」
「Eh, ah……yes.」

Enjoying the stupor stricken me, Jig-san briefed about the sword.

「You requested it to basically be a one handed sword which can also be wielded in both hands. That posed me the biggest challenge. Typically, the blade of a two handed sword tends to be at least 1m long which makes it difficult to be wielded with your height and arm

length.

Despite Jig-san's bushy moustache, I attentively listened to the contents of his explanation.

「Therefore, the length of the blade has been restricted to 70cm. In exchange, more space has been added to the hilt in order to accommodate left hand. To utilize the strength of both hands, the centre of gravity will have to be adjusted……give it a swing.」

As told, I grasped the passed on sword with one hand and brandish it as is.

「——It feels so natural as if I'm swinging my own arm.」
「……Fumu, well done. Next, both hands.」

The moment I added my left hand to the hilt of the sword, I could feel the sense of stability increasing further.
As is, I struck it down from overhead.

「Looks good.」

Twiddling with his moustache, Jig-san leaked a satisfied smile.

「Amazing……it creates an illusion as if the power of my whole body in its entirety has been imbued in the sword.」
「It's not an illusion. By the way, it's single edged, however……the tip of the sword is double edged, so be careful. Two third of the blade is single edged while the proximity of the sword tip is double edged.」
「Eh……why is that so?」
「A Single edged sword tip reduces the piercing power of a sword. It wouldn't matter if the opponent were a human; however, if the opponent were a tough monster, it would be troublesome. If you brandished an unedged sword tip at such an opponent, there'd be a risk of it snapping. I believe you have the ability to some extent; so, that's why.」

Gu!
With iron will, I prevented my brain from reinterpreting Jig-san's words. Thus far, I have already committed excessive acts of discourtesy toward Jig-san.

「……What happened to you? Well, that's about all the explanation……lastly, call it a blacksmith's intuition, I can feel a strange power dwelling inside this sword……but it doesn't seem to be evil, so rest easy.」
「Does this sword have a name?」
「Nothing in particular. It's a bespoke item, after all……so, calling it just sword would do. If you're so inclined to, why don't you name it yourself?」

I see……name it myself, huh?
Since Jig-san has authorized, I'll oblige.
Jet black sword blade, red pattern……

——Alright then, I have decided. Your name will be!

Having paid my thanks and sheathed the sword in an already prepared scabbard, I left Jig-san's shop.
From tomorrow onward, I'll hunt the Smagobs until my Sword Arts skill reaches Lv3. Simultaneously, I'll receive rank D quests.
Well, it'll get busy.

On my way back to Feeder Pops', I concentrated my consciousness on my beloved sword.

《Red Veins Shrouded in Jet Black (Noir・Meld・Rouge)》——An exclusive (Unique) weapon. ※Blood Ogre Horn
Unique: Pulsation of Blood (Blood Pulse)——Minute increase in the sharpness for every person from the same race killed by the user.

This……is this the effect of that guy's rare skill?
If killing a person from the same race——killing a human increased its sharpness……I would turn more and more into a vice thief.

However, I won't do such a thing.
Tomorrow, I'll let it drink as much blood of the Smagobs as it wants.

——While caressing the sheath of my beloved sword, Noir, I arrived at Feeder Pops'.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 2

2nd Volume, 2nd Chapter【The Experiment】

「——Gyapia!」

Inside a certain forest to the south of Merville Town, the deathly wail of a Smagob echoed.
Going to this forest has become a daily routine for me. It's my home ground now.

「……It does give a sense of accomplishment when the Lv of a skill rises.」

With a swing of my darling sword, Noir (※it would be better if no one but I knew the official name of the sword), the blood of the Smagobs sticking to the sword blade flung in an arc, bestrewing the grass beneath my feet.
With merely that, the clouded sword blade regained its shine, making me gawk in admiration.

It has been five days since I resumed my activity after receiving the sword——it's fifth month, third week, the day of the Dark.

Everyday, I train inside the South Forest in the morning while undertaking Rank D jobs in the afternoon.
Occasionally, when I chance upon the Neville Grass, I play with the Caterpillars, too; however, my priority is the Smagobs.

Today, it yielded the results as my Sword Arts skill finally reached Lv3. That was the reason for my merrily trying the new sword out.

————————
Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race : Human
Age: 18 years old
Job: Adventurer (Rank D-)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv2 (18/50)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (5/150)
・Sword Arts Lv3 (3/150)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (6/50)
・Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (32/50)
————————

The subjugation of Smagobs and Caterpillars falls into the scope of Rank E quests. That being the case, it won't be eligible for my, who is a Rank D adventurer, quest completion count.
However, I can receive the quest and reward without any issue, so it isn't wasteful.

Exiting the forest, I returned to the highway. In relation to a Rank D quest, which I plan on completing in the afternoon, I set out toward Blossom Village.
Going by its name, it seems to be a village surrounded by flower beds. Honey collected from the honeybees is the specialty of this village, or so I have heard.

However, a swarm of monster wasps《Military・Wasp》has infested a hive of the honeybees which the guild has been commissioned for.
An aerial enemy will be a nuisance. Also, it's a Rank D+ quest. However, the Lv of my Sword Arts skill has increased.

While traversing the highway, I noshed on the delicious, as always, food and emptied the water canteen.
By the way……Arnold-san and Lim have become regulars at Feeder Pops'.
Exceedingly pleased with the cooking, Arnold-san gets along well with the fellow old man, Dario-san.
As for Lim, whenever Dario-san is free, he teaches her cooking.
Is she perhaps scheming revenge……?
I earnestly support her, though. I mean, who would say no to delicious food?

That said, the beastkin family are, of course, carrying on as adventurers, too.
Although we don't act together frequently, whenever we get to have a meal together, we receive a joint quest.
Thus far, we have had such a relationship.

Above all, unless I were alone while 'improving' my ability, it would be inconvenient for me.
During the battle against a Smagob, an excuse could be made for unnatural movement. However, murdering a Caterpillar no sooner than gifting it the Neville Grass with a smile (※requirement); I don't think such a crime scene could be overlooked once witnessed.

Moreover……with everything settled down, there was nothing disquieting anymore, so I decided to conduct an experiment which had been on my mind for a while now.
I received a Rank D quest the other day and subjugated the Orcs that infested a village in the outskirts of Merville Town.

Because I wanted to test something, I deferred the training with the Smagobs and invoked Thief's Godly Skill. I *guruguru* bound the one, whose Stick Arts skill I had successfully stolen, with a tree vine.

After snatching its club and ensuring that it couldn't move, I tried to return the skill.
I can return a skill, of course.
However, I can fully return, too, not just partly.
Why call it full return, not transfer? Well, a skill cannot be returned to someone who didn't originally possess the skill. Return has its limitation.

After the battle with the Blood Ogres, while I was returning Arnold-san's skill, I wasn't able to fully return Sword Arts Lv3……I would say Thief's Godly Skill being Lv2 was most likely the reason if you asked me.

It can explain as to why I can distribute only up to Lv2.
Oh well. When Thief's Godly Skill reaches Lv3, I'll be able to prove it.

There was one more thing I wanted to know. In case of full return, what would happen to the skill I possessed? As in-
Would its current status be Lv1 and skill points (0/10) while the skill itself remained?
Or, would it disappear?

It's the latter.
When I fully returned Stick Arts skill to the Orc, my own Stick Arts skill disappeared completely.

About this, I feel a little relieved.
The reason being, my skill box is already filled more than half.
It's not like Stick Arts skill was totally useless; however, its only role was to increase the total success rate upon the invocation of Thief's Godly Skill.

As per system, if I stole another skill while I already possessed 10 skills, although I conjectured that I would be able to discard an unneeded skill, there was no guarantee.
What if the result were the former, not the latter? This thought made me a little impatient.

With this, however, I can steal skills without any hesitation.
Later on, after hitting the maximum number of skills, if I feel the need to replace a skill, I can fully return the skill to someone who possesses the skill.
That said, simply discarding a skill may be possible, nonetheless.

Just that for merely the sake of a little experimentation, I returned Stick Arts skill to the Orc.

However you look at it, that's equivalent to two monsters——it's Lv2 Stick Arts skill. Also, it can increase the success rate by 2%.

But the result was a failure.
It's not like a returned skill cannot be stolen again; however, I failed.
What the slightly indignant me did to the tied up Orc……I'd better not tell, I think.
Nah. Oh well. Can't a little strengthened Orc be set free in the fields?

——Finally, I managed to reach Blossom Village and learnt of the location, where the Military・Wasps were sighted, from the villagers.

Passing through a lovely flower bed, I proceeded to a grove.
Scattered beneath my feet was a destroyed beehive.
Here's the information I received priorly: a humongous wasp; carnivorous; beware of the stinger and poison jet.

Having sensed the buzz in the sky, when I looked up——

——There it is.

It has a yellow and black striped body, the size of a human fist. On its left and right are tough mandibles, gaping and shutting.
As for its skill……none?
Is its rank high due to it containing poison?

Although it was slightly scary……Its flying speed wasn't much.
Having clearly perceived the nosediving silhouette, I calmly sprang to the side in order to dodge it.

At the instant of stab, a sharp needle protruded out of its abdomen, aiming at my eye.

Having realized that its kamikaze attack had been dodged, it hurled itself at me with its menacingly clacking *kachikachi* mandibles ready to tear my flesh.
In order to avoid the mandibles, I lightly stuck my sword into the enemy's body.
Noir's sharpness is terrific. With almost no feeling of resistance, I cut the the Military・Wasp into three parts: head, chest and abdomen.

Within a beat, I stabbed the sword into one of the three parts: the tumbling head.
Now……then.
According to the villagers, the venom of these guys has an effect of summoning their fellows. If they were lured here, wouldn't it be bad?
I kicked the rolling abdomen, disseminating the venom into the area.

……Consequently, in a short while——multiple buzzing sounds could be heard.

One, two————……all five monsters, huh? The number matches with the report.
There's a conspicuously large individual, too……is that the boss?

「There's just one thing I want to ask you. That you guys have destroyed the hive of the honeybees……if, resultantly, Dario-san weren't able to make the honey dipped fruits pie, would you take the responsibility? Aaaah!」

While screaming those words out loud, I mowed the unhinderedly flying enemy down.

「——Ooh, Seiji……n? Where did you get that jar of honey from?」
「Eeh, today, I visited Blossom Village in relation to a quest. As an expression of gratitude, they gifted me this honey……do you need this?」
「Would it be fine? The quality of Blossom's honey is top, so I'm glad on behalf of the inn. Alright then, at tonight's dinner, I'll treat everyone with honey made confectionery.」

「——Fuu, after a delicious meal, sweets are simply irresistible.」

Patting my stuffed stomach, I muttered to myself atop bed.

Well, well. From tomorrow onward, the main focus of my activity will be learning (stealing) magic.
It would be better if there were a monster, however……

Although I intend to plunder monsters, if I found real thieves, I would punish them by stealing their skills, too.
Oh well. If there were a human who could conveniently use magic, would they be a thief? To steal a skill from an old retired mage with one foot in their grave is a bit……isn't it?

——For now, I will ask around the guild and see.

2nd Volume, 3rd Chapter【The Fluidic Creature】

5th month, 3rd week, the day of the Light.

「——The subjugation quest for a monster that's……able to use magic?」

Answering my enquiry was the Merville Guild receptionist, Sheena-san.
Well arranged facial features, fair complexioned skin——a beauty the manner of speech of whom matched her looks.

「Yeah, I'm interested in a monster that uses magic of any kind.」
「If it's Seiji-san……it means it has to be within the scope of Rank D, right?」

I returned a nod.

Basically, I intend to receive a quest appropriate for my Adventurer Rank. There may be stronger monsters with more useful skills, but I don't need to be hasty.

With my current ability, I can solo a Blood Ogre.
However, if I overestimated my strength and ventured into an area inhabited by powerful monsters, I would only meet a premature death.

There's a possibility of getting encircled by a group of Blood Ogres or encountering a monster that I'm not a match of.

The purpose of the Guild in introducing the Rank restriction system is to keep the Adventurers from losing their lives wastefully.
Receiving a quest under the guarantee of safety margin, polishing the skills all the while, seems the most reasonable.

……Save for the inevitable cases.

That's the reason as to why I'm searching for a Rank D scope quest. I, who's not knowledgeable when it comes to monsters, can't be expected to know as to which ones use magic. Hence, here I am asking Sheena-san quietly.

「Wait a minute……found it……」

Upon my saying so, Sheena-san left the reception desk and walked toward the bulletin board which had the quest papers affixed.
I followed after her. Pleasing fragrance drifted to me softly.『Ponytail! Cute ponytail!』That my mind housed such idiotic thoughts with such an innocent face, no one would be able to guess.

「——Here, it's a Rank D+ quest. Albeit few, there are monsters that use magic. I've heard from Bays that Seiji-san is competent. Still, be careful not to be careless, please.」

As for the quest paper she indicated……

————————
Collect the nuclei of the Slimes inhabiting the Paudal Wetland Belt in the southeast of Merville.
Quest completion requirement: deliver nuclei worth 2,000 Dalas.
Client: Helmut Firm
Time limit: none
————————

「Erm……Slimes are those gelly guys, right……?」
「Ah, did you know?」
「Nope, do Slimes use magic?」
「Yes. Although the Paudal Wetland Belt is a place overflowing with nature, the mana in the atmosphere there is extraordinarily thick. It seems to be a manaspot.」

Manaspot……a place where mana tends to be dense……?

「What springs out of there as if pulled out is the Slime from the quest. Because it's disconnected from the southern highway, it's not frequented by people.」

I see. So, the purpose of the quest isn't subjugation……it's the collection of nucleus.
Hence, the subjugation proof part isn't required either……or rather, as long as I have the nucleus, there won't be any complaint.

「Albeit miniscule, it's nucleus is a mana crystallization; therefore, it seems to be in demand. Do you want to receive this quest?」

Just to be sure, I had her indicate the location of the Paudal Wetland Belt on the handheld map.
It's quite far……If I were on foot, such a tiring distance would require a day's trip.

「If you need transport, it's provided by the gate, okay?」

There's that option, too?
It's not needed now; however, it could come in handy if I decided to go on an outing.
Still, wouldn't it be better to get on one?
I have yet to see……the Riding skill.

Sheena-san suggested so kindly, after all, it would leave a bad aftertaste if I declined.
After having completed the quest receipt procedure, I headed to the South Gate.

In case of moving from town to town, there's an option of using a guarded coach; however, my destination – the Paudal Wetland Belt – is disconnected from the highway. Besides, the speed of a coach tends to be slow.
Renting a personal mount would be the best, no?

In the vicinity of the gate, the shops which conducted the business of lending mounts could

be found sporadically. I decided to enter one such shop and asked.

「Erm, can I rent a horse?」
「Aah, you can rent it for 200 Dalas per day. Are you……an Adventurer? Where do you plan on going?」
「The Paudal Wetland Belt.」
「On a horse……it'll be risky there. Although it may be more costly, wouldn't you like to rent some other mount?」

Basically, a horse is the most commonly used means of transport after, of course, walking on foot. Even when you talk about coaches, the single horse ones can be seen most often.
Occasionally, however, people can be seen riding a mount other than a horse.
Such as a furry cow, or a feline one such as……a tiger?

「At least, a mount that can defend its own body……I don't mean to say a Scale Dragon, but……」

Did he say……
A dragon?

「More details.」
「……Why so sudden? Are you interested in a Scale Dragon?」
「Details.」

A smile befitting a merchant was plastered on the shop clerk's face.

「I see. Actually, this shop's top recommendation is a Scale Dragon. It's inside, though. Do you want to have a look?」

Thereafter, I was led inside the shop.
From the opposite side of the parting board, cries of various mounts could be heard.

There it is.

Adorably lain down and curled.
Tough scales covering its entire body, one black scale after another shining under the sunlight from the dormer, mingling with a glimmer of jade green, creating a lovely hue.

According to the shop clerk:

With ferocious and superior hind legs, it's a runner that no other mount can hold a candle to. Overnight, I can cover a distance of 1,000 ri. (TN: 1,000 ri = 3,927 km)
Its thick tail maintains its body balance for extended periods of time. The comfort of ride is top notch, too.
Furthermore, being an amphibian, it can play an active part in the wetland belt.

He may have exaggerated a bit; however, it has already seized my heart.
Its horn looks good, too.

Unintentionally, I checked its skill constitution out.
As for the skills it possesses.
《Fire Elemental Resistance Lv2》
《Water Elemental Resistance Lv2》
Hmm?
It doesn't seem to have any battle-oriented skill; however, its sharp fangs and talons look menacing enough.
Fumufumu……different dragon species perhaps possess different resistances.

「How much does this Scale Dragon cost per day?」
「1,000 Dalas per day.」

……So expensive! It's five times the horse's.

As for the quest reward, it's 2,000 Dalas……do I have to splash half of that on just the conveyance?
However, in case of this quest, the remuneration as well as the quest completion counter will increase with the number of nuclei.
If I think about it, I can complete the quest more efficiently if I roam about freely in the wetland belt.

Or I should say, I want to take this fellow at all costs.

「————Thank you for the business. The basic way of riding is what I taught you earlier. Don't worry, even a beginner can ride it with ease for it has been adequately trained.」

Upon those words, I observed the Shop clerk-san; especially, at the word《trained》; however, I couldn't find the《Beast Tame》skill.

「Are there people who tame the mounts?」
「N? Aah, just like this Scale Dragon, there are beasts captured and trained by people who do it as an occupation. We then buy from them. Unlike horse, their birth control is difficult.」

I see……it has piqued my interest……no, for now, let's focus on magic. Yes, magic.

When I turned my face to the side upon feeling the Scale Dragon's breathing, I found its cute round eyes gazing at me.
When I stretched my hand and patted its head slowly——

BAKURII

——Aah, like this? Got it.

……You see, it's not scary. Ne? I was scared for nothing……
It hurts……just a bit……just a bit.

「Oioi, if you're not careful with play-biting, you can get injured. Before it happens, pull your hand out, quick.」

After all, I cannot have the Scale Dragon lick a bitten hand.
Sniffs
However, because it can get healed right away, it's fine, isn't it?

Then, I pulled myself together, straddled the Scale Dragon and faced outside the town through the South Gate.
Upon seeing me, a gallant figure called out. The sentinel who I occasionally exchange greetings with: Nicholas-san.

「Oh, if it isn't Seiji. Leaving the gate in such a grandiose manner, where are you going?」
「Nah, just going to the Paudal Wetland Belt for a bit.」
「It's quite far. Good, it's best for an Adventurer, but don't act recklessly.」
「If it becomes dangerous, I'll flee back here. That aside……how is it?」
「……How is what?」

To Nicholas-san, who was making a strange face, I emphasized my sitting-astride-the-Scale-Dragon figure.

「Aah……how do I put it? Are you carrying the feed to a dragon's den……?」
「No, I'm not! I have had enough.」

Having parted with Nicholas-san, I grabbed the Scale Dragon's reins back.
Destination: the Paudal Wetland Belt in the southeast.

Dragon Rider……sounds cool and all, but.

——When its tough legs clutched the ground firmly in order to run, the vibrations it produced faintly transmitted to the back of the straddling me.
However, as getting on it was my own idea……I have no right to complain.
Although its speed isn't much different from a horse's, the comfort of ride is outstanding.
There was little to no fatigue due to rocking.
Moreover, it's endurance seems to be considerable. Judging from the position of the sun, it had been running for about an hour, yet there was no instance of its speed dropping.

Still, for caution's sake, I took a break by a brook bank. After drinking water, we resumed our journey.
We had advanced halfway through the highway. While I was checking the map, the route diverted to the east.
Away from human habitation, the air carried a tinge of anxiety.

To have rented it……was perhaps the right choice.

As the sun quickly reached its zenith, we arrived at the Paudal Wetland Belt.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 3.1

2nd Volume, 3rd Chapter【The Fluidic Creature】2nd Part

「How do I put it? It's not what I imagined. The image I had… was more of a muddy and damp swamp, but…」

There was no such thing at all.
Beneath the cloudless blue sky,
From a distance, the water looked so transparent that it appeared more like a lake than a swamp.
The depth of the water was shallow, though. The short water plants were ornamenting a light green carpet, spreading far and wide.
Sparsely growing shrubs weren't blocking the sunlight at all. A magnificent scenery was stretching out.

「The wetland belt was actually such a place…」

Far away, mountain ridgelines could be seen… is that Rave Mountain Range?
Because I'm in the southeast, it probably is.
If so, is Sven Empire on the other side?
I would like to travel to other countries, too… wasn't the village where Lim used to live in the south of the Empire?
Demons… huh? It's impossible for the current me.

Together with the Scale Dragon, I set foot in the wetland belt.
Since there was no such thing as a pathway, I proceeded with care.
Care ought to be taken. From the pattern, you might think of it as solid ground. However, it was in actuality a swamp.
Although the water plants were creating the illusion of a carpet, if one looked carefully, they would realize that it wasn't the ground.
Even though the Scale Dragon can swim, I don't want to plop into the water all of a sudden.

However, the Scale Dragon seemed to know this area better than I. Without any instruction, it firmly stepped on the ground and started walking.
No way! Even this kid can do it. Even this kid.

After advancing for a while, I could feel the dense mana in the atmosphere of the manaspot on my skin… not paying it any more mind, I started searching for the target: Slime.

————There it is.

Floating on the shallow water surface… I caught sight of a luminous silhouette of a shining white body.
Feeling slightly excited, I jumped off the Scale Dragon and drew my sword. I approached the enemy slowly while checking the damp ground.

《Light Slime》——possessing Light Magic Lv1 (2/10).

Now then, time for what I came here specifically for.
——To loot.

The enemy, who had noticed my approaching it, flabbily transformed its body and vigorously closed in on me.
Its shape was indeterminate… like that of a fluidic creature's. Its height was less than half that of a human's.
In the centre of its body, a pebble-esque object was floating… that's probably the nucleic bead.

I thought it would use magic, but it hurled its fluidic body and closed in on me. With Noir in one hand, I launched a sword strike.
Having split, about one-third of the Slime's body dropped on the ground.
Although I was carefully watching it split… I could only see the remaining two-third body, which included the nucleic bead, move.
The body which contained the nuclei bead seemed to have become the main body.

「What happened? Not gonna use magic?」

As if in reaction to my words, its nucleic bead sparkled a little, and a small Lightball materialized before the Slime.
While observing its state, I reconfirmed my foothold so as not to slip off the water plant.

——A Lightball, that was a size that could fit into one's palm, was fired my way.

Although its speed was reasonable, there was no need for me to intentionally get hit.
After dodging it, I spared a vigilant glance to grasp the extent of its power.

The Lightball collided with a shrub and exploded dimly, scorching the trunk lightly.
Oh well. Lv1 (2/10) probably amounts to this much.

I cut the distance in one breath. While slicing the enemy's body into two, I invoked Thief's Godly Skill.
However… it resulted in failure.
Since the success rate is merely 31%, there's no helping it.

I was *wakuwaku* excited but ended up a bit frustrated
Oh well. Let's search for the next one.

Before that, I must collect the nucleic bead of this one…
Although magic is important, so is money.
I turned around to deliver the final blow to the fairly small-sized Slime.

What… the…

The Slime flew at full speed.

Its *purupuru* jiggly body was unexpectedly quick.

「Running away?」

I straddled the Scale Dragon's back and chased the escaping Slime.
If I were on foot, it might have escaped. However, the Scale Dragon's legs cut the distance mercilessly.

「——A-HA-HA-HA, wanna go somewhere?」

I sound totally like a bad guy…
I sneaked around the Slime and blocked its escape.

「Now then, the game of tag ends here.」

Resigned? Or so I thought, but… the Slime jumped sideways——toward another Light Slime.

「What the——」

I wasn't sure as to what I was seeing.
Can these guys coalesce?

I decided to view the spectacle first.
Their *unyounyo* wavering bodies soon settled down as if they were one body.

Its size… was bigger than before and so was the nucleic bead in the centre.
However, this wasn't the most surprising part.

《Light Slime》——Light Magic Lv1 (4/10)

I almost leaked a smile.
Is that… what I think it is?
Such a thing, huh?

Since I had visually confirmed the coalesced one's Light Magic, I tried to——invoke the skill, but… for some reason, it didn't invoke.

What's going on?

If I had to take a guess, out of the two coalesced monsters… I had already failed to plunder one… is that why?

If so, isn't there only one chance to steal it…?
If it were left to coalesce, it would be too dangerous. If I failed at stealing, it would be troublesome.
Considering the current success rate and the number of times it can be invoked, plundering the Lv1s that have coalesced multiple times will be more efficient.

I shifted my focus back to the Slime in front of me and chopped its body in an instant.

After scraping most of it, when I *gubori* pierced my hand into the remaining fluid and extracted the nucleic bead, the Slime lost its original shape and dissolved into the ground.

——The time I had was limited, so I decided to search right away.

————————

On the way back from the Paudal Wetland Belt——I checked the day's results on the Scale Dragon's back.

Light Magic Lv1 (8/10)

In my opinion, the results are excellent.
To begin with, the rate I encountered the Slimes at was low; hence, the rate of fusion was even more so.
When a Slime broke away underwater, even the amphibian Scale Dragon would lose the sight of it.
I could only gnash my teeth at that…

So, considering all of that, it's excellent.
I, who had acquired my very first magic skill, was merrily firing Lightballs and Lightspheres at random. When the Scale Dragon stared at me with earnest eyes, I pulled myself together.

As for the Slimes that appeared——there were three kinds: Light Slimes, Dark Slimes and Flame Slimes.
As their names suggest, the dark Slimes possessed the Dark Magic skill while the Flame Slimes held the Fire Magic skill.
However… the Light Slimes were the most in number.
Is there a particular reason…?

A hypothesis came to my mind.

Today… is the day of the Light.
From what I've heard, the seven days (Fire, Water, Wind, Earth, Dark, Light and Origin) trace back to the spirits.
Is there perhaps any relation between the two? The quality of mana accumulating at a manaspot differs in accordance with the day and transforms the springing out Slimes…?

I, who could now use Light Magic, could clearly feel the thickness of the mana in the Paudal Wetland Belt, which was a manaspot. However, I wasn't able to distinguish just the Light element in particular.
Or I should say, the atmospheric mana is just a mass used as a source for magic. An element doesn't exist by itself, or so was written in the Caterpillar series book.

However, if we assume there does exist a relation, we can also nod to the appearance of the Slimes belonging to Dark and Fire which are close to the day of the Light.

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tomorrow.
Anyhow, I wasn't able to confirm a single Slime possessing the most wanted, Origin, magic.

Because the day of the Origin——will be tomorrow.

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From there, I made a beeline to the Guild, passed the collected nucleic beads and received the reward.
There were eight nucleic beads while the one belonging to the coalesced Slime was bigger than a normal one's.
The quest required me to collect the nucleic beads worth 2,000 Dalas whereas the appraised value amounted to 4,800 Dalas.

Even after deducting the rent of the Scale Dragon, the gain wasn't half bad.
Moreover, since the quest completion count increased by two, there was nothing left to complain about.

As you would expect, because I was out on an adventure, I was sweating buckets. Therefore, before returning to Feeder Pops', I took a bath at a luxury inn. Feeling refreshed, I returned to my room.

If Feeder Pops' had a bath, it would outclass even a luxury inn…
If it's about funds, I can aid them. However, I don't think Dario-san would accept.

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Speaking of money, that shop clerk who dealt in mounts,
Well aware that I liked the Scale Dragon a lot, suggested that it would be better for me to buy it than renting it.
I was in agreement with him, of course.
Do you know how much he asked?

——-30,000 Dalas, that son of a-
That son of a-!
What a massive- don't you think?

I know I'm being scammed, but I want it.
Oh god, human greed is endless!
To become even stronger, to rank further up, I must complete the quests *bashibashi* without holding back.

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The next day——5th month, 4th week, the day of the Origin.

Upon meeting the monster in the Paudal Wetland Belt, I uttered a delighted shout.

《Prism Slime》——Origin Magic Lv1 (2/50)

It’s hereeeeee!

Although it’s Lv1, the maximum skill points required are 50. As you can guess, it will take time to master the skill.
However, considering the limit on the (number of) skills, it has more merit.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 3.2

2nd Volume, 3rd Chapter【The Fluidic Creature】2nd Part

「How do I put it? It's not what I imagined. The image I had… was more of a muddy and damp swamp, but…」

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Read Riot Grasper Chapter 4.1

2nd Volume, 4th Chapter【The Zealous Heart】1st Part

——6th month, 4th week, the day of Earth.

Ever since I started going to my principal magic training ground – the Paudal Wetland Belt – about a month had passed.
The Prism Slimes, possessing Origin Magic, gave me more delightful surprises than what I had expected.

Those guys can coalesce with not just the Prism Slimes, but other Slimes as well.
On the days of Origin, the Slimes belonging to six other elements sprang out, too, and those guys coalesced with all.

What of the skill points?
Let's assume a Slime possessing《Origin Magic Lv1 (2/50)》coalesced with a Slime holding《Fire Magic Lv1 (2/10)》… a Slime possessing《Origin Magic Lv1 (4/50)》would be born.

Although I'm glad, the rate of encountering a Prism Slime is in itself quite low. What's more, it doesn't show up on any other day but the day of Origin. Hence, I'm unable to accumulate skill points to my liking.
By the way, when I acquired Origin Magic, I was already in possession of Light Magic. For some reason, the two didn't merge.
It must a phenomenon characteristic to a Prism Slime.

Nevertheless, the last day of Origin was a memorable day.

Although the rate of my growth isn't lacking, the time needed to master Origin Magic will be considerable when the maximum skill points required are taken into account.
I directed my consciousness and checked the skill.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank D+)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv3 (6/150)
・Physical Ability Enhancement Lv3 (6/150)
・Sword Arts Lv3 (20/150)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (38/50)
・Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (32/50)
・Light Magic Lv2 (34/50)
・Origin Magic Lv2 (2/150)

Finally, Origin Magic has reached Lv2.
Speaking of which, Thief's Godly Skill has reached Lv3, too.
Is the number of times it can be invoked still favorable? The number has decreased to six; however, since the success rate has increased, I have no right to complain.

Although Light Magic is redundant in the presence of Origin Magic, it has a special significance. It's my inaugural magic skill. It can be used for both attacking and healing, so I have decided to keep it in reserve.
It has already been confirmed that the magic skill with higher Lv and skill points takes precedence.

The day of Origin is spent in the wetland belt; the day of Fire is a day off; the days of Water and Earth are spent in the South Forest practising magic while hunting Caterpillars and Smagobs… or undertaking a joint quest with the beastkin family; the day of Dark is spent at the library; the day of Light in the wetland belt.
That's the result of this cycle.

That today was the day of Earth, where would I be…? In the forest south of Merville.
After having played with the Caterpillars, with the objective of raising Abnormal Status Resistance to Lv3, it was now early afternoon.

Well then, shall I kick my magic practice off?

If the imagined magic is strong, an enormous quantity of mana in the atmosphere must be converted in order for the magic to manifest.
The convertible quantity increases with Magic Skill Lv. I have now increased the skill points to some extent.

For a large《Ball of Light (Light Ball)》, albeit being the simplest, the quantity of mana that I could convert was insufficient. With Lv1, it would only be the size of a fist.
Now that I'm a Lv2, I can make one the size of a basketball.
The power need not even be mentioned.

By the way, it's magic practice only in name. It's more about sharpening the (mental) image.

As the mana required to be converted to manifest magic is controlled by the Magic Skill Lv, when I say『my』magic training, I mean sharpening the image or simply creating a new image.
If I were an ordinary person, I would be repeatedly refining mana according to the Caterpillar series book. It's necessary to improve the magic skill.

Earlier, I said that Light Magic can be used for both attacking and healing. The images of《Ball of Light (Light Ball)》and《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》have already been sharpened.
What's left is for the Light Magic Skill Lv to rise and the power to increase.
By the way, while imagining the Light of Healing, I recalled the time when Arnold-san's injury was being healed.

Healing isn't particularly the effect of Light Magic, it's possible through image. Through an image of Fire Magic, albeit disturbing, the wound can be burnt to stop the bleeding.
As for the healing image of other magic skills, how about the Water Magic?

However, now that I'm able to use magic myself… I've realized that magic is disadvantageous in close quarters combat.
Even if I assigned a name to the magic in order to sharpen the image, it would take time for it to invoke. If I leisurely tried to invoke the magic while the enemy was within a few m (meters), I would only end up torn into pieces.
A mage is fundamentally suited to be a rearguard.
Oh well. Since I have Sword Arts as well, I can adapt to the situation.

So then, during the practice, I tried to imagine magic.
Inside my mind, I willed for《Optical Camouflage (Light Hide)》.

Optical Camouflage——I thought I would try it if possible via Light Magic.
The so called『Invisibility』.
Something I have always longed for.
Don't misunderstand. I don't intend to abuse it.
If you're a man… don't you agree?

What's known as Optical Camouflage can either be Image Projection or Light Penetration. I understand the theory somewhat.
Image Projection, in simple terms, is photographing of the surroundings and projecting those photographs in real time through an optical membrane wrapped around the body.
For example, an octopus.

As for Light Penetration, it's literally light penetration.
When an object is exposed to light, it reflects it. Through the reflected light, the object can be visually recognized.
What if the light completely penetrated the object?
The object would become transparent.

Although that is pushing the limits, it is what it is.
However, with the image of Light Magic, it'll be easy.

I imagined light penetrating my body.
I imagined the beams of sunlight, shining overhead, passing completely through my body.

「Alright, I'm able to turn transparent quite smoothly now… however, if I move my body, it'll get fairly blurred~」

I tried to move my body.
As transparency flickered here and there, my body could be seen.
Through Light Magic, I have to reduce reflectivity to zero. However, while moving, the difficulty seems to increase exponentially.
By the way, if my eyes became transparent, I wouldn't be able to see, but that's where the

quality of magic lies.

Constant regulation of such a continuation type magic requires a precise image, and the precision seems to increase with the increase in the Magic Skill Lv.
It's quite difficult…

When it was much needed, it turned out to be difficult.
Let me say it again. I don't intend to abuse it.

——After repeating the Optical Camouflage exercise several times, I switched to practising Origin Magic.

In the end, creating a composite element with Origin Magic is merely a gimmick which only serves to give birth to dreams.
I'm glad, of course, that I have access to the magic of six elements via only one Skill Slot.

What I initially thought of was to produce Lightning.
If I managed to produce Lightning, I was thinking I would fuse it with Sword Arts and create a finishing move, like a certain hero whom I was a fan of.
However, I don't understand the principle of Lightning in depth.

When the atmosphere heats up, water vapours rise to the sky and form clouds.
I know it comes from there.
Water in the clouds freezes which forms ice crystals. Intense air current results in friction which generates electricity.
My memory is shabby about it.

Having given up on imagining the principle, I imagined a thunderbolt generated by a thundercloud. Even though I had shot Fire, Water, and Wind magic up in the sky, nothing happened.
I'll retry it when my Magic Skill Lv has increased.

In such fashion, I worked hard at fusing Sword Arts and magic in order to create my finishing move.

Then, I created one.
The greatest and strongest finishing move.

In my head…

However, when I tried to manifest the image, it didn't go so well.
Why is that?

「Conflicting elements… no, it's not that——」

————Thus passed my first day.

2nd Volume, 4th Chapter【The Zealous Heart】2nd Part

——6th month, 4th week, the day of Dark.

According to my schedule, it's the day I'm supposed to study.

Even though I said that, I merely visit the library and binge on a book that piques my interest.
It's quite fun.

『The situation surrounding Lechelle Kingdom. Beware… you're being targeted.』

When I stumbled upon such a title… I couldn't help pick it up.
I moved to the reading space and turned the book open.

『——Situated in the west of Aesha Continent, it's a flourishing country with rich mines, bountiful agriculture and plentiful commodities. However, don't forget the threatening devils lurking around such a blessed country.』

The author of this book is probably a Lechelle Kingdom resident…

『Let's first start off with the introduction of the devil of the east. You're aware of the commercial city located in the centre of Lechelle Kingdom, Merville, right? Although the Royal Capital, Iris, is located in the north of the kingdom, Merville dispatches the export and import articles to and from the port. It's a commercial city which is indispensable to the kingdom. In the east of that Merville is《Veronica Citadel City》.』

Veronica… which also serves as a barrier control station?

『Veronica Citadel City was the very first citadel city developed for the purpose of controlling the barrier at a low elevation point of Rave Mountain Range. The barrier is surrounded by secure unified walls to counter incursion from foreign invaders.』

I see. The citadel city is integrated with the barrier. If that's the case, then the devil of the east is…

『By foreign invaders, I obviously mean Souven Empire in the east. Do you get it now? The devil of the east is Souven Empire. The empire is full of people who discriminate against beastkin. Blinded by the human supremacy belief, they're coarse.』 (TN: Sven Empire has been changed to Souven Empire)

Is the author of this book a beastkin…?

『It's a hyena trying to prey on the abundant resources of Lechelle Kingdom. Had Rave Mountain Range not existed, it's not that hard to imagine as to what would've happened. Anyways, Rave Mountain Range and Veronica Citadel City——if I said these two are a shield

that protects Lechelle Kingdom, it wouldn't be an exaggeration.』

Fumu, from what I know, they are indeed cruel.
Somehow, I don't want to visit Souven Empire anymore.

『Furthermore, its Emperor is the lowest of the pigs. The retainers are pigs, too. Decency can't be expected of a country where the top brass consists of pigs————…』

Isn't this part the personal opinion of the author?
Skips

Is the author someone from Earth? They're totally foul mouthed.

I skimmed through it without paying any mind and turned the page over to the next chapter.

『Let's keep the devil of the east up to here. Okay? If you meet a human from Souven Empire, please be careful. They're no good.』

Oh well. Taking caution is better than doing nothing.

『Next is the devil of the south. Anyone who read this would immediately figure it out. Whom I'm referring to are——demons. Although they're humanoid, they're an existence that launches an offensive on other races without any word. It's said that they're distributed over in the south.』

South, huh?
Continuing southward from Lechelle Kingdom is an uninhabited area, certainly.
The map which I bought at the town didn't have the southern side drawn.
Since it's an uninhabited area, it means it's not developed enough for humans to live.
The Paudal Wetland Belt should be fine, though. Although it's disconnected from the highway, towns and villages can be found close by the way back.

By the way, further south from the Great Forest, where we were attacked by the Blood Ogres, is a wasteland. That's the uninhabited area.
It doesn't seem to be an environment where people can live.

It would be difficult to secure water and food at a place uninhabited by humans, not to mention the appearance of strong monsters.
Because they live in such a place, demons seem to be formidable.

『When it comes to invasion by demons, Lechelle Kingdom and Souven Empire are equally under threat. In order to defend against invasion by demons, Lechelle Kingdom has constructed numerous forts on the border of uninhabited area. Demons are said to be highly capable. However, their population being small goes in our favor. If you meet a demon, escape right away. The chances are slim that you will be able to escape, though…』

Hey, don't write such scary things!

『Why are demons hostile toward other races? Why do they attack them? It's quite simple. The reason dates back to a distant past. Demons, who were a force at that time, massacred other races. They wanted control over the world.』

…Hey, they're terrible, hey!
Controlling the world? That's outrageous!

『Humans, beastkin, elves, and dwarves were mass murdered. The world was engulfed in flames. However, out of pity, the mighty dragons fought the demons off.』

Dragon, eh~ that's my dragon! Beat the baddies!

『When the intense battle came to an end, the mighty dragons had lost a number of lives. Demons had dwindled considerably down as well. Or so say the accounts. Dragonewts, who have now been confirmed to be the descendents of the mighty dragons, are also powerful and bear hostility toward demons. They too are small in number.』

As you would expect from a dragonewt whom I wanted to be reincarnated as.
Oh well. It can't be helped now.

Fumu, is the scale dragon a creature that pursues a different evolutionary path as well?

——Well, such were the contents of the book.
I put the book back and stretched my body.
That's it for today. I'll have to be ready for tomorrow.

Since tomorrow is the day of Light, I'll be on an adventure at the Paudal Wetland Belt.

——Dining area of Feeder Pops'.
I enjoyed a meal with the beastkin family.

「So, what are you doing tomorrow, Seiji?」
「Tomorrow, I plan on going to the Paudal Wetland Belt. It pays nicely.」

By the way, I have a little less than 10,000 Dalas. It's not sufficient at all to buy the Scale Dragon.

「Really? If it's okay, can you please take Lim together with you? Last time, when we talked about the Paudal Wetland Belt, I promised her we would go visit next time.」
「Okay, I don't particularly mind.」

That is so.
The landscape of Paudal Wetland Belt is just so beautiful. I remember saying so before.
Oh well. Tomorrow isn't the day of the Origin. So even if I weren't fixated on stealing skills, it would be fine.

「Hmm…? Only Lim? Is Arnold-san not coming along?」
「I have some business to take care of, and Lim wants to go. Well, if she's with Seiji, she

won't be in danger.」
「I, too, can defeat a slime. So you need not be concerned.」

Pouting Lim looks so cute.
Her Cooking skill seems to have increased, too. I occasionally tasted Lim's dishes『although there was no comparison』they were good.

By『danger』, did Arnold-san mean monsters, or did he mean there would be no problem even if his daughter were with a human?
I'm curious.

In any case, it has added to my tension.
Since the two of us will be going together to the Paudal Wetland Belt, Rook (※the name I gave to the Scale Dragon without its permission) will have to dress up nicely.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 5.1

2nd Volume, 5th Chapter【The Devil of the South】1st Part

Author's note: go on.

The PoV isn't Seiji's in the first half.
You may think you're reading the wrong novel, but it really is『Thieving in the Otherworld』.

Its golden eyes were like glass marbles. Its head was endowed with a sharp beak like that of an eagle's. The talons on its forelegs possessed the characteristics of a raptor's. There were wings on its back, but by no means was it an eagle. It was a beast whose lower body couldn't be more different from a bird's.

That creature——the Griffon was *kyorokyoro* searching around restlessly.
Surprise floated up onto the faces of the occasional passersby, but they resumed walking as if they had understood something.

Eventually, a man who stood before the Griffon uttered.

「You have truly subdued a Griffon… Pardon me, really.」

The man, who muttered so, stepped into a cave which appeared as if a great stone wall had been gouged out.
Advancing further in, one would realize that it wasn't an ordinary cave. It was an artificial one.
It was a place built to accommodate a humanoid creature. Even though sunlight was striking through a hole, it was dim.
A stone decorated on the wall was emitting a phosphorescent light which was illuminating the room.

The man called out to the person inside without any reserve. The person, who had turned around, didn't have a shred of delight.

「What is it, Dino? Do you have some business here?」
「Hey, hey, do I need a business to visit my fiancee? I just wanted to see your face.」
「Really? Now that you've seen it, leave.」

The man named Dino, despite not having been offered by the other party, slumped into a chair.
His body covered in muscles and his clothes seemingly made of fur added further to his wild nature.
Even when he sat down, he didn't look any smaller.

His skin was swarthy and his eyes were dark crimson like blood. Two small horns could be glimpsed through his dark crimson hair.
The woman facing Dino had similar colored skin and eyes. However, the color of her hair

was a brilliant silver. As for her horns, they couldn't be seen either.

「Hey… Don't play with me. Lemme see that friendly look on your face a little…」

「Unfortunately, you're not a fiance that I chose myself, so I have no reason to be friendly with you.」

The silver haired woman-——Alba, coldly declared.
She didn't return Dino's humor at all.

「Oh well. It (marriage) has already been decided. Since it (Griffon) loves you so much, teach it at least one way of being useful to a man by then (marriage).」 (TN: The line was confusing by itself, so I added a few aids)

Dino and Alba——were demons.
Their parents engaged them in order for a superior descendent to be born through the marriage of two powerful demons. All for the sake of regaining their former glory.

The truth is, both Dino and Alba were extraordinarily capable.
In the southern tip of Aesha Continent, which was inhabited by the demons, there were many demon groups. However, the parents of these two, who were the heads of their respective groups, were close.

「Even if… it's only a griffon on the surface? Since it's a troublesome partner, I'll catch it only if necessary. At least a woman shows more love.」
「I asked you because if I brought it here myself, it would be dead. Besides, I didn't catch it, I'm friends with it.」
「Hehe, I'm glad.」
「To be honest… I hate you. If you were one of those humans living up north, I would have killed you already.」

Dino laughed such words off and replied.

「Sorry to disappoint you, but I'm a demon. So are you, and you'll be bearing my kids. That matter has already been decided.」
「I regret that I appointed you to bring Luna here…」

Dino's voice contained a tinge of anger.

「Luna…? Is that this fellow's name? Then, take care of it even more from now on. When you're out, tell it to attack me on sight. Oh well… In that case, I'll be free to hit and kill it.」
「Hou… Then, that will be a chance for me to let anger take its course and kill you.」

Their eyes crossed; silence ensued for several blinks.
In the room that had attained tranquility, Dino was the first to voice.

「I get it… I'll return for today. Really, though… You're pretty only on the outside. Inside, you're belligerent.」

「Thank you for the compliment.」
「Oh well. If you hate me so much, why don't you bring it up with your parents? If you sweep some garbage up north, they may accede to your whims.」

Hirahira fluttering his hand, Dino left.
That was a joke, of course.
No matter how capable Alba was, she would only spell trouble for herself if she plunged in to exterminate by herself.

「——Fuu……」

Alba's, who was the only one left in the room, sigh echoed in the empty room.

For a while, she stayed still as if pondering over something. Then, she grabbed the spear leaning against the wall.
She was carrying a large bow on her back. It must weigh quite a lot, yet she lightly strode toward outside.

「Kwoo」

The Griffon——Luna, that was watching Alba leave with round eyes, uttered a cry upon getting its throat caressed.

「——Sorry, Luna. Would you please… hear my request?」

----------◆◆◆

「——Uwaaa… It really is beautiful.」

Upon witnessing the scene at the Paudal Wetland Belt, Lim had an expression of a child who had just left childhood.
After getting off Rook's back, she spread both her arms wide and inhaled deeply.
She's able to breathe the same air brimming with nature as in her hometown, which happens to be on the other side—in the south to be exact—of Rave Mountain Range, which happens to be in our line of sight. Is that why she's in high spirits?

Her expression turned really bright…

I'm grateful to Rook that brought us here.
Just as planned- No, the two of us had to inevitably ride together. That said, it wasn't a『back hug』.
Nah, it's not like I was expecting it.
Because Lim jumped on Rook's back quickly, I had to sit in the back.
Why don't you understand, Lim? Why don't you understand?

However, Lim has not the slightest idea as to how much I enjoyed her *fuwafuwa* fluffy tail touching my arm while I was holding the reins.
Nah, it really was *fuwafuwa* fluffy.

That my fist loosened control and that I steered us in the wrong direction is a secret.
We arrived safe and sound, but…

「Ah……」
「H-hey, are you alright?」

Upon stepping on an afloat water plant in the swamp, Lim's body tilted.
Carrying her sopping wet body on my shoulders『tehe☆』————

Didn't come to pass… Lim agilely corrected her posture and jumped.
That she's a cat beastkin doesn't mean she's a cat. She doesn't particularly dislike water. Anyone would hate getting wet.

「It's more convenient to move about the wetland belt with Rook. Let's get on?」
「Uun, I want to walk a little.」

After pondering for a while, Lim said such a thing.
Because she had been sitting on Rook all this while, she wanted to walk on her own feet.
…Impossible!

「Is that so? Then, when you feel tired, do let me know.」
「Thank you.」

——Thereafter, we hunted (plundered) the Slimes noncommittally while passing the time enjoying the nature of Paudal Wetland Belt leisurely. Since it wasn't a quest with a time limit, we could afford to be carefree.

When the time approached noon, we decided to search for a good spot so we could eat.
It wouldn't be at all right if we were disturbed by the Slimes during the lunch break.
In an open space, we sat under a shrub facing each other so as not to leave a blind spot and took the lunch out of the leather bag.

I know that today's lunch isn't Dario-san's work.
It's the information I received from Dario-san himself.

…This time, don't fail——I was stressed.
Dario-san, GJ.
Lim seems to be intent on exacting revenge for last time.

I rented Rook as usual, so I paid for it.
In exchange, Lim arranged for lunch.
She didn't say any such thing as「I prepared it myself」. She pretended as if she bought it at Feeder Pops'.

Had I not received the information in secret, my body would again have been subjected to a planted landmine.
Because of such a mood, Rook had been permitted to retire till we returned.
My heart seems to have been clenched.

Fufu, I won’t make the same mistake twice.
Credit goes to Dario-san, though.

2nd Volume, 5th Chapter【The Devil of the South】2nd Part

When the wrapper was slowly unwrapped, an excellent aroma wafted out.
Well, I didn't know as to how she was raising her skill, but her skill was rising, surely.
The day when her Cooking skill reached Lv2 wasn't far off.
Therefore, delicious food would soon be a normalcy.
Moreover, eating under such a beautiful scenery added an emotional spice.

「Oh, delicious.」

These were sincere words.

Basically, the cuisine in this world pivoted around bread. However, that didn't mean there was no rice.
Where there was wheat, there was rice.

Once, I requested onigiri from Dario-san. Lim probably learnt of it through Dario-san.
(ED note: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onigiri)

What was inside the wrapper was a garnished onigiri.
Inside it were many small ingredients which I had to figure out individually.

As for the ingredients: a Salmo fish, which was endemic to Pascam, boiled in soy sauce; a rolled omelette, which was made using an Alma chicken egg; fried Alma chicken; etc…
Muu… Although it looked like an ordinary onigiri, I realized what it contained inside only when I put it in my mouth. That was an exquisite seasoning… this fellow made…
The seasoning of the ingredients was as good as always.

「Un. It really is delicious.」

It was not an act. It was truth.

「——I'm glad.」

After she heaved a sigh of relief, a smile spread all over her face.
Err, had I better pretend 'not to know' for the time being?

「Err, why are you glad, Lim? You only bought it at Feeder Pops'…」
「R-right…」

It seemed to be fine.
The target of her revenge didn't seem to be me, but Dario-san.
If that's the case, then——nah, let's not say anything.

And so, after we enjoyed the lunch in a 'kyakkyaufufu' mood, a feeling of satiety overcame us.

However, the momentary peace lasted only so far.

「——N? What's… that???」

By chance, it entered my sight.
I was casually gazing at the cloudless blue sky; and then, a black spot appeared on the clear blue.
Gradually, the spot enlarged. When it did, it could be seen moving erratically.

It was moving in a zigzag track.

「Lim… be careful… Something is coming.」

——At last, the form of the approaching object was unveiled.
Is that… a bird…? No, a beast?

On the back of the creature, which I hadn't seen before, was the silhouette of a person.
Then, is that a mount?
I heard in Merville that a flying mount was so expensive that it had no relation whatsoever to anyone other than royalty or nobility… Other than those who were insanely rich…

That flying mount, without lowering its speed, crashed into the ground——No, crashed into the swamp,
Magnificently while splashing a large column of water.
The body of the person on its back hurled vigorously and banged onto the ground
They… aren't dead, are they?

On that mount's body… many arrows were sticking out.
Moreover, one of them didn't seem to be from an ordinary bow. Wasn't it from an anti-aircraft crossbow installed in a fort?

Though, shouldn't I first give priority to the person riding the mount?
I ran to the person who was slapped onto the ground. Lim followed behind, as well.
Because the ground below contained plenty of water, they might still be breathing.
Let's treat——

However, I dunno why Lim showed cautious intent and cried.

「Seiji! Wait!」
「W-what is it…?」

I tried to ask Lim the reason. However, I was dazzled the next instant.
After such an impact, they should have been dead. However, the body, that was lying on the ground just now, got up relaxedly.
How strong is their body?
The rolling spear and bow seemed to be their belongings. They picked them up and checked

their condition.

However, although they weren't rough… they weren't delicate either. Still, they could be inferred to be a woman from their body curves.
The swarthy skin, beautiful silver hair, and slightly pointed ears which differed from a human's.
Her features were pretty, however… her impression was somehow cold.
And then, albeit striking——her bloody eyes stared in this direction.

「De… mon…」

In a hoarse voice, Lim squeezed those words out of her mouth.

「——Ow… I knew I was rash… Luna…?」

After glancing this way, the other party calmly extracted the arrows that were sticking out of her body and searched around.
She seemed to be looking for her mount.
Having heard what Lim uttered, 'demon', I took an alert stance and concentrated my focus on the other party.

——Stupid… that…
This… is bad…

A shiver ran down my spine as a silhouette ran past my side——It was Lim.

「How dare you… My village, how dare you——」
「Foo… come here! Lim!」

That was probably the strongest and the fastest I had seen her. The fury of Lim.
There was Magic Power Conversion, too, supplementing her attack power.

However, her opponent blocked that fist strike.
With one hand at that.

「Hou… I thought you were a midge, but you seem to be hotblooded.」

It was a cold voice that didn't make one feel the undulating sensation.

The spear, which she was wielding in one hand, at Lim————

「——Hey. What do you think you're doing to my companion…?」

A metallic clank resounded.
My sword and the opponent's spear screeched… and repelled each other.
The shock ran up my arm… Was I just pushed back…?

Is that the physical ability gap between races? It's no joke.
Despite my relying on the skill…

In an instant, the opponent's eyes turned increasingly cold. It was creating an illusion as if the temperature had gone down.

「…Lim, take Rook and fall back. To be honest, her level is far apart from yours.」

There was no reply, but somehow, she seemed to have understood.
She must have realized the difference in ability with that one strike moments ago.

「To kill you… I will have to crack a few joints, it seems.」
「Please wait a moment. Even though you are a demon, you and your mount are injured, no? I can use healing magic somewhat. So, if I treat your injuries, would you please return quietly?」
「Before that… I'll cause some harm your way…」
「T-that's…」
「Oh well. Even if it weren't the case, I wouldn't ever show my back to a human being. Also, I have no intention of accepting charity.」

Is there no other way out?
Damn! The only advantage I had was that the opponent was slightly injured.
Demon, huh?
It didn't look good.

Focusing once more on the opponent, I strongly grasped the hilt of my darling sword, Noir.

Name: Alba・Mewt
Race: Demon
Age: 20
Job: Reconquistador of the Attack (Attack Reconquista)
Unique: Great Talent Precocity
Skill(s)
・An Evangelion to the Servant (Servant Reinforce) Lv3 (77/150)
・Monster Tame Lv4 (23/500)
・Archery Lv3 (135/150)
・Spear Arts Lv3 (112/150)
・Body Arts Lv3 (98/150)
・Fire Magic Lv3 (113/150)
・Wind Magic Lv3 (105/150)

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 6.1

2nd Volume, 6th Chapter【The Blow of Resurrection】1st Part

——It was really bad.
I could sense my『death』approaching.

A pressure that far surpassed the intimidating air exuded by the enraged Blood Ogre back then. My respiratory tract gave in to the pressure as my breathing went out of order.
The fear didn't emanate merely from numerical inferiority of the skills Lv.
What made my body tremble was something indiscernible.

What was called『death』was scary.
Whether I would be able to reincarnate if I died again, honestly, I had not the slightest idea.
When a human found themselves in the clutches of death, they would tend to have just one thought.

『I want to live.』

I found myself in the very same situation.

This might be the most basic instinct……planted in all creations.

The first thing that came to my mind was to run away.
However, the opponent in front of me was a demon. Avoiding the battle was already not an option.
If I showed my back, I don't know as to what kind of an attack I would receive from behind.
Judging from her skill constitution, she was proficient at everything be it short range, middle range or long range.

With a few m (meters) of distance between me and the opponent……the possibility of running away was nonexistent.

This fellow's skills Lv, even if I say so myself, was abnormal.
Over Lv3 across the board. What's more, Monster Tame had reached Lv4.

Or I should perhaps say, the opponent possessing a unique《Great Talent Precocity》just like I possessed a unique《Scholar's Knowledge》was the cause.
Accelerated growth of the skills……come on!
I heard that a great talent bloomed late. If it could be perfected early, it would be threatening.
What's more, she was a demon.

《An Evangelion to the Servant (Servant Reinforce)》——reinforces the user's followers. The rate of reinforcement depends on the Lv.
……Since it had a pseudonym assigned, it must be a rare skill.

The combination of it and Monster Tame skill would be quite effective.
The only relief for me was the mount being out-of-commission after having crashed into the swamp.
I glanced to the side. Although it seemed to be alive, there was no sign of movement.

If I were attacked by it, I could only sob.

If it were impossible to escape, I could use the mount as a shield for negotiation…… however, I was not sure if she held the mount dear.
I was afraid that it would turn into a beehive when the time came.

「Aah, I only have a word of advice for you.」

All of a sudden, the demon before me slammed the spear vigorously onto the ground.

「You seem to be peeking at Luna, but……」

Luna……is that the name of the mount?
She probably noticed my glancing toward it.

「If you intend to do something bad to Luna, drop it.」

「If you did any such thing, I would kill you without mercy. Not just that, I would kill that beastkin girl, too, no matter where she ran off to. And then, your parents, siblings, friends, everyone. I would crush everyone.」

……Although I found that she treasured the mount, I also found that using it as a shield would be the most foolish of ideas.
However……did I really make her say that much?

「Is that so? Well, then I'll do nothing to that mount. However……」

I pointed to Lim and Rook in the back.

「Likewise, if you tried to lay your hands on them or any of my acquaintances, I would kill that mount or whatever, too. Whether I can win against you or not, I wouldn't know unless I tried. You can snap my body in half or tear it into a thousand pieces, but they are just fellow travelers.」

Upon my words, a faint smile surfaced on the demon's face.

「……For a human, you have some nerve. Fine. After I have killed you, if they run away without turning their hands toward me, I will spare them.」

「——You listening, Lim?! If I lose, return to the town! Don't challenge her!」

After shouting with all I had, I resolved myself.
I wasn't resolved to die, though.

I was resolved to survive.

——Then, how do I win……?
The first idea I was stuck with was to steal her skills and weaken her.
This morning, I had already used Thief's Godly Skill twice on the Slimes.
Although the skill points of Light Magic skill that I could steal had become insignificant, I decided to retain it for now.

The remaining attempts were four. The success rate wasn't even 50%.
If all went well, I would be able to steal two.

Which ones do I go for? That said, I don't think I can visually confirm《an Evangelion to the Servant (Servant Reinforce)》or《Monster Tame》in this battle.
Besides, for the sake of『victory』, I had better weaken her by stealing martial arts or magic skills.
For argument's sake, even if all the remaining attempts succeeded, the opponent would still have means of attacking.

My skill box had space for three more.
Actually, if I could steal three, it would be more than enough, but what after that?

Even if discarding were possible, it would be Rear Ultimate Secret Move——the final form《Theft Discard (Grasper End)》. Besides, I would not succeed all four times even fortuitously.

Before that, can I even touch the opponent?
Whether it was actually a death match or not, I wouldn't know if I didn't see.

I could hit her hard with my Front Ultimate Secret Move which I had been practising……but it wasn't complete yet.

Out of Spirit・Ability・Body, I had already lost in Ability and Body.
However, my Spirit was somehow braced.
I was able to fend the fear, that was seeping into my body, off with the support of the instinct called attachment to life.

——The one who launched the offensive first on the calmy postured opponent was I.

I lightly exhaled; after which, my body burst forth as if an explosive had been triggered.
I grasped the sword, which I had been wielding in one hand, with both hands in order to unleash its full power.
Considering the Lv, only Sword Arts, which had reached Lv3, could stand toe to toe.

Even though I were waiting to steal the skills, I would first like to know the difference between my and the opponent's ability.

Previously, when I blocked her attack on Lim, both of us used just one hand.
Because I had been pushed back at that time, keeping a hand unused was not possible.
While attacking with full power, I would switch to one hand when I found a gap——and

steal.

I could also use magic, but even the opponent understood that it was not suitable for close quarters combat.
My adversary, the demon, seemed to be intent on using spear, too.

——The sword strike I unleashed was easily blocked with the spear.
Nah, the ‘easily’ part might be my own opinion.
However, it was the first time my sword skill was so splendidly negated ever since it progressed to Lv3.

「This time, it’s going to be my turn——」

The opponent fired——consecutive thrusts.
Although I had experienced such a thrust, which was rather pointed than linear, against Bays-san, I wasn’t accustomed to it.
Her speed was faster, too.

I handled it somehow with the sword. However, if the opponent gained the upper hand in terms of the number of hits, I wouldn’t be able to handle it completely.
I frantically dodged the ominous strikes by a hair’s breadth——no, while receiving red cuts on my skin.

You……bitch……!

Some sweeps were added in between the thrusts, too. However, I warded the direct hits off. All the while, I cut the distance to the opponent.
I was bleeding from all over my body. However, I was being healed immediately by Vitality Enhancement.
Therefore, as long as I didn’t receive a fatal injury, I would be fine.

The difference in ability was clear.
A difference the current me wouldn’t be able to overcome.

The opportunity to steal would never come if didn’t create it myself.
One step. Another step. Even though I was getting wounded, I kept taking steps forward.

As if flustered, the opponent took a step back, moved exaggeratedly and unleashed a thrust.

「O……raaa!」

I shifted the trajectory in order for the attack to slide over the sword fuller. As it grazed my ear and came to a premature end, I advanced further.
With this, I got through.

I switched the sword, which I was wielding in both hands, to one hand, and cut the distance to the opponent’s bosom in one breath.

——First up, that Spear Arts……

2nd Volume, 6th Chapter【The Blow of Resurrection】2nd Part

「……Gu……ubue」

However, my hand couldn't touch the body of the opponent.
For a moment, I didn't know as to what had happened, but the vacuity of thought ended in an instant.
……Because my sense of pain was still functioning.

While my hand met but the empty air, my abdomen met the opponent's knee.
If I said it punctured my body, it wouldn't be metaphorical as my body had caved in.

「Albeit only slightly, your movement was unnatural, but I was alert……when you touched my body, did you find it fascinating?」

No good……this fellow……is too strong.

The opponent pulled her leg out of me, assumed a swaying posture——no sooner, she launched a lightning side kick on the spot which didn't differ a tiny bit from the previous one.
Unable to mitigate the impact, I tumbled unsightly on the ground.

「A……ga……gu」

It was impossible to breathe. It was too painful……to die.
L-Light Magic, heal……

「……Fuu……haa……gu」

While slowly raising my body, I turned my gaze with the same hostile intent as before.
The opponent, who had turned around to deliver the final blow, stopped walking as an expression of surprise floated up her face.

「Hou, you really can use healing magic. Since you displayed brilliant swordplay, I was certain you were lying when you said you could use healing magic, but……」
「N-Now that you know I wasn't lying, will you please leave quietly if I treat that mount……?」
「Fumu……」

Surprisingly, she fell silent as if contemplating.
However, there was no gap at all.

「I have a proposal, but.」
「What is it?」
「Earlier, I said I had no intention of accepting charity. If you let me keep you as a pet, you can keep your life intact, too. You must already know the difference in our abilities.」
「Keep me……as a pet?」
「You are quite young. A human who is so strong at such a young age is rare. It will be fun to

keep you.」
「Keep me……like that mount?」
「That's a friend, not a pet.」
「Then, I would be treated even lower than that?」
「What I'm saying is, if you become my pet, I'll let you treat my friend.」

Pet……of a demon? How laughable.
I would be treated lower than even a mount.
You just want to make me cry, don't you?

「That beastkin girl seems to be important to you. Then, if you want to be my pet, you have to kill her.」
「Wha……」
「So, how about it?」

No, absolutely not!
A human- no one wanted to die.

「Err……yeah. I have two things to say.」
「Speak.」
「First, although I may not look like it, I'm 18 years old. I'm not much younger than you.」
「But you look so young. I want you to tell me your secret.」

Even though it was cramped, it was a baby face nonetheless.

「Second……my answer is the same as before.」
「……」

「——How about you become my pet?」

「Ku……ahahahahaha! You're one amusing human. Fine. In exchange for your making me laugh, I'll keep my earlier words. I won't do anything if that girl doesn't turn her hands to me. You can die——in peace.」

The opponent stabbed the spear, which she was holding, into the ground.
While I was thinking as to what she was doing, she raised her hand to the sky.
On top of her palm, a mass of fire came into being and continued to grow.

……Huge.
And dangerous.

The《Ball of Fire (Fireball)》that I could create was not a match.
The Fireball that was as large as a human could easily burn me to death.
The air about the Fireball vibrated intensely.
So hot……even my bones wouldn't be left if I were hit.

After those words, the huge Fireball was shot at me without any hesitation——……

It caused a great explosion.

Super hot flames burned the ground of the wetland belt.
The water evaporated. Dense steam floated up and obstructed the field of vision.

When the view cleared, nothing was left but the ruins of conflagration.

「……Dead?」

After saying merely that, she ignored Lim and Rook, and walked to her injured mount.

Lim was a smart girl.
Although she let her emotions take course and was about to move, she was not so immature as to let the life of someone, who had protected her with his body, go to waste.
Although her lips were quivering, and she was about to cry, she didn't attack the demon like before.
She only kept glaring.

She would live……strongly……

——Wait, who's narrating all this? I.
In other words, I was alive.

When the opponent was at the stage of refining the huge Fireball, I might not have been noticed, but I had completed preparations and was ready to invoke Water Magic.
The moment she shot the huge Fireball, I invoked《Shield of Water (Water Shield)》.

Basically, there existed counter elements in elemental magic.
Fire and Water, Wind and Earth, Dark and Light.
Therefore, I used Water Magic. However, it didn't mean that Fire was weak against Water.

Although they negated each other, if one was more powerful, the other would be outdone.
In fact, the water wall I created gave me barely enough time to escape before it disappeared.

By the way, I could contest with the same elemental magic. However, in that case, the losing side would be subjected to the consolidated energy of both sides.

Because my《Ball of Fire (Fireball)》had no way of winning, I chose Water Magic instead.

After escaping from the clutches of the demon's huge Fireball, I concealed myself within the eruption of fuming steam.
Concealed——not metaphorically……

At the moment, I was under the effect of highly acclaimed《Optical Camouflage (Light Hide)》.

However, as tears would appear if I moved, I was still.
Because it required full concentration, I couldn't use other magic.
Therefore, without attempting any surprise attack, I planned on waiting quietly until the demon left.

Lim might be glaring at the demon, but she would soon return to the town as she was instructed.
Will I be walking all the way back on foot?

Well, the reason as to why I was idling and thinking over future plans——because I was playing dead.

Isn't it uncool to brag after playing dead?
No, dying after bragging would be uncool.
Life was the most important.
Suicidal act was an absolute no.
With this, everyone would survive, so it was for the best.

The mount, which the demon was looking after……albeit weak, raised a cry.
It stared toward me and cried cautiously.

……If I remember correctly, don't birds have extraordinary eyesight?
But I was invisible……how did it find me?

……

……

——It couldn't be sheer luck.

Suspicious, the demon woman took an alert stance and approached toward me.
It really was a faithful friend. Really.

「Hey, what's up?」

I cancelled Optical Camouflage and greeted with a silly face.

From a distance came Lim's, who was calling my name out, voice.
This reunion would have better been late.

「……You're alive? What kind of magic was that? You came up with something very interesting.」
「It's convenient……I don't abuse it, though.」
「And what do you want to do?」
「I'll return your words to you.」
「……I want to settle it.」

2nd Volume, 6th Chapter【The Blow of Resurrection】3rd Part

Instantly, I back stepped and opened up the distance.
Frankly, I didn't have any resources of dealing with her from that position.
I was beaten at short range. My magic was outdone at middle range.
With a face that suggested she had no intention of playing a game of tag, the opponent stabbed the spear into the ground and took the large bow off her back.

She nocked the arrow, which she had taken out of the quiver on her back, and *giriri* drew the bow… with an air splitting sound, the arrow was fired my way…
From its trajectory… it would pierce through the middle of my brows; however, at such a distance, I had the margin to knock it off with my sword.

After several rounds of attack and defense, the attack came to a halt. Had the contents of the quiver finally depleted?
To begin with, there shouldn't be many arrows.
The situation hadn't improved, though. I tried to sort my breathing.

…N? What… is she doing?

Although there was no arrow, the opponent assumed the posture of nocking something and locked the bow on me.
The next instant, I felt a strong wind.
Not from the front, but the back.
No, it was different.
The wind was not blowing from behind me. The wind was being gathered right in front of my eyes… by the demon?

「Oh… shit——」

Although it was taking a bit of time to invoke, it was this fellow's——real arrow!
In the airspace, where nothing should have been, a whirlwind condensed.

When the air had been compressed to the extreme, a faintly shining jade green arrow manifested.

The large bow was drawn to the limit————

I hurriedly willed for Earth Magic《Shield of Earth (Earth Shield)》to invoke.
…Unification of arrow and Wind Magic, huh???
This fellow thought of the same thing.

————It was fired.

Accompanied by a sound as if air was being torn, the magic arrow ate the distance in a

straight line.
The distance was enough for the earth wall to appear in time…
With a *gagon!* sound, the shield was shot and smashed.

「Dammit!」

Despite all that, the speed of the arrow dropped only a tiny bit.
I can——dodge this!

「Ri…diculous…!」

I thought while I was dodging——

——A pang ran through my flank.

The magic arrow, which was passing through my side——shifted its trajectory.
It suddenly curved and infringingly bored into my flank. No sooner, the air dissolved and disappeared.

「Serious…ly…?」

While clasping my flank, I collapsed onto the ground.
With all my power, I applied《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》on the wound. However, it didn't heal right away.
Using the sword as a crutch, I somehow stood up. It was quite dicey, though.

The opponent of course had no reason to overlook such a state——the demon walked up to slightly away from me and said.

「Let me ask once again. Do you want to be my pet?」

「…As a human… my answer would be 'no'…」

「I see.」

This time, she refined a killer Fireball.
The same trick wouldn't work again.

I didn't want to die…
If only I had completed that finishing move——

On the brink of death——the scenes of my practising in the South Forest popped up in my mind.
The details of the finishing move that I thought of weren't that complicated.
What came to my mind was the sparkling six colored body of the Prism Slime that showed up in the Paudal Wetland Belt.

The point was to fuse the energy of all six elements.

Fire and Water.
Wind and Earth.
Dark and Light.

Abolishing the resistance of counter elements, fusing all the elements, unifying the fused elements with the sword and attacking the opponent… is what I imagined…
However, fusing counter elemental magic proved to be extraordinarily difficult; hence, it couldn't reach the completion.

——Aah, while I was lost in thought, the Fireball, that would surely burn me, slowly enlarged.

The Prism Slimes were amazing. They could coalesce with other slimes, too.
Their nucleic bead would become larger and larger——

Nucleic bead…?
Hmm, if I'm not mistaken, Sheena-san said it was a crystallized form of mana.

Crystallized form of mana——
Origin of magic——
State of origin——
A step before the manifestation of magic——

While *butsubutsu* muttering in delirium, I concentrated my consciousness on my palm.
Honestly, I didn't know as to what I was doing.

The Fire Magic stopped one step short of manifestation… next, Water Magic… Wind Magic——all types of elemental magic stopped a step short of manifestation… is what I imagined…

In that state, I let all the mana sublimate into magic at once.

Glistening like a rainbow, it was the same six colored magic globe as I imagined.

「——Unbelievable… So easy…」

What was so difficult about it, which I had spent so much time practising for?

————Floating on my palm was a magic ball which was glittering fantastically due to six colors intermingling with each other.

「What's… that?!」

Unease surfaced for the very first time on the face of the demon before me.

「Well… what do you think this is?」

The wound hadn't stopped bleeding. An unpleasant sound like that of a heavy rainfall was buzzing in my head.

However, it felt as if a soothing tone was emanating from the six colored magic ball.
It was perhaps an illusion.

The tone of vigorous fire.
The tone of calm water.
The tone of gentle wind.
The tone of vast earth.
The tone of gloomy darkness.
The tone of bright light.

It was kind of a… pleasant sound…

I stroked the magic ball and clad it on my beloved sword.
The unification of sword and magic.

「…Begone…!!」

A huge Fireball was once again shot from the demon's hand.

I held the sword aloft and slanted my body a bit.

When I brandished the sword, a *buchibuchi* unpleasant sensation transmitted from my flank. However, I disregarded it all.

I——from where I had postured——

I didn't want to die anymore.
I wanted to live… in this world… together with everyone…

——With all my strength——

Had I not lost in Ability and Body… I would have lost in Spirit…
It wasn't entirely dependent on skills Lv.
The Image:
Cutting all apart.
(ED Note: He is holding a clear image of "cutting all apart" in his mind)

————Struck the sword down.

Outer Ultimate Secret Art—— (TL Note: I will be translating Omote/Ura as Outer/Inner)

「——Multi-elemental Extreme Sword Wave——(Symphonic Rave)!」 (TL Note: Rave Mountain Range will now be Liebe Mountain Range)

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 7.1

2nd Volume, 7th Chapter【The Final Outcome】1st Part

Author's note: There may be arguments for and against, but…
I'm dropping 'b'. (Translator's note: I'm not sure about what the author means here, but here's my guess. In the last chapter, there was a skill called 'Symphonic Rave'. For 'Rave', the author used レイヴ which is pronounced as 'Reive'. People must have pointed out that it should be 'Reibu' instead)

——What I imagined was a rainbow sword flash that could cut all apart.
A shockwave that could tear the air into bits.

「————U……oooo!!」

Disregarding the screams of my injured flank, I swung the sword to the end.
The crescent moon shaped sword flash crashed into the huge Fireball refined by the demon.

The contest lasted——for but a few seconds.
With the sound as if air was being licked, the flames raged. From the Fireball, sparks scattered onto the ground.

Go————just like that, go…!!

「Ridiculous……I'm being——pushed back——…」

The moment I felt as if I heard a faint voice——the opponent's Fireball was smashed into two.
Accompanied by a thunderous roar, the burst open mass of flames scattered into the surroundings.

The rainbow sword flash had considerably died down. However, it had yet to extinguish.
After cutting the Fireball apart, it proceeded to the demon.

Concurrently, I mustered the remainder of my strength, kicked the ground and flung.

「——Ku!!」

Due to the shock of receiving an unexpected counterattack from the prey that was supposed to be hunted, or due to the humiliation of getting her magic shattered——the demon's body went stiff.

The sky ripping six colored slash stretched from the opponent's shoulder to her contralateral abdomen. In the next instant, there was only one color——a red liquid gushed into the air.

Nevertheless, I didn't stop running.
I had better not think she was knocked down with just that.

Because she wasn't an opponent I could afford to be careless against.

「Don't… kid with me——-such…a thing…」

Without kneeling on the ground, the demon grabbed the spear, which was stabbed into the ground, and turned toward me who was dashing in pursuit.

…Just how strong is she?

However, the agility of her movement wasn't the same as before.

「With this————」

Simultaneously dodging the struck out spearhead, I hit an upper sword cut (diagonal) with all my power.
(Translator's note: 逆袈裟 Gyaku kesa)

「————It's ooooooover!!!」

Metals rubbed against each other accompanied by a thud… The spear, which the demon was holding, whirled in the air.
While rotating, it drifted away from us and transfixed into the ground turning into an 'Objet D'Art' of the wetland.

My sword was on the verge of the opponent's throat… Actually, when my sword came to a halt, the tip had slightly pierced into her throat…
Blood trickled down the demon's throat and intermingled with her bloodstained bust.

Let alone the bow, even the Body Arts which she excelled at wouldn't help her escape at this distance. In such an adjoined state, magic need not even be mentioned.

——Game, set, match.

It was so quiet as if the time had stopped.

「…I lost…? Fine…just kill me…」

Such words leaked from the demon's mouth.
With the intimidating air about her having faded, she gazed with empty eyes.
To be honest, I didn't know how the opponent felt.

However, I knew what I had to do.
I must kill her.

Based on my ability, the victory could only be called a miracle.
The demon race looked down on other races… When I actually met one, I was convinced it was true.
Leaving them alive… would be too dangerous…

The sword had already been poked. I just had to thrust it half a step more to take her life.
With just that, I could finish her.
However…

——Thus far, I had taken the lives of countless monsters.
Yet, I had never felt a shred of guilt.
Even the Smagob that possessed a form which was relatively closer to a human's.
However, the demon before my eyes… was far too humanoid…

They were… unable to exchange words…
However, because she possessed intelligence, a feeling of reluctance was welling up in me…

Having figured my hesitation out, the demon shot these words at me.

「What happened? Not going to kill me? …Don't tell me there's actually a human hesitating to kill a demon…」
「…There's something I would like to ask.」
「What?」
「Why do the demons initiate attacks on other races?」
「…Let me ask you in return. Why do other races attack demons on sight?」
「That's… because demons tried to conquer in the past… and trampled over the other races, I think…」
「I see. Well, didn't those abominable dragons stop us? We are going to regain our past glory. Most of the demons are intent on doing so.」
「…Are you different from the most?」

The opponent closed her eyes in denial.

「I may not be one of the『demons』from the earlier question, but in individual capacity… I can't say I'm different. In fact, I'm made to contribute to the foundation for the sake of regaining the glory.」

She spun those words with a tone of self deprecation.

「As for killing humans, I don't feel any hesitation. However, as far as 'attack' is concerned, it's mostly the other side that initiates the attack.」
「This time, you were certainly the one to start a fight… Afterward, didn't I try to negotiate with you on a number of occasions?」
「…Let's not stray away from the topic. What I mean is, if we come across them, they generally start a fight. Has this answered your earlier question?」

She matter of factly shot those words.
What the heck am I doing…?
Am I trying to find a reason to thrust the sword in or am I trying to find an excuse to pull the sword back…?

「One more thing. How did you fall down here? Don't demons dwell further south?」

「…Right. What if I say that my side initiated the attack this time?」
「What… does that mean?」
「Further south from here, humans built a fort. I marauded that place.」

What…the…?!
Marauded the fort built on the border between the kingdom and the uninhabited area…?
Don't tell me a demon group is heading up north?!

「However, the lone me was outnumbered. At last, I had the table turned against me. Since Luna was injured, it couldn't fly. That's why I fell down here.」
「Eh, alone…?」

A single horseman charging into a fort… Even though she's a demon, what was she thinking?

「I have no intention of telling you the reason. Enough already. Just kill me.」

Yeah… I must kill her…
What am I reluctant for?

I had already visually confirmed all the martial arts and magic skills that demon possessed. Considering that I possessed Origin Magic, I had better prioritize stealing martial art skills. Especially, because Thief's Godly Skill required direct contact with the opponent, I strongly felt the need of Body Arts in this battle. So, first of all, I would steal Body Arts——

——Such an idea had completely left the current me's mind.

What was revolving in my mind was whether to thrust the sword in or not.
My heart was beating as if gongs echoing inside my body.

——I put power into the arm that was grasping the sword.

As to why I thought it was fun to live here in this world, I believed even now that it was thanks to everyone around me.
The elements that might bring harm to them must be eradicated.

When I was——about to pierce the sword deep into the opponent's throat——

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 7.2

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 7th Chapter【The Final Outcome】2nd Part

「Kwooo!」

At that moment, an entreating cry resounded in the tranquil wetland.
——From the mount which the demon was earlier astride.

Dragging its body that was crammed with arrows, it approached.
It wanted to protect the demon… but it didn't seem to have strength…
It was almost crawling on the ground.

After struggling for a while, it stopped close to where the demon and I were facing off.
Its abdomen could be seen heaving faintly which meant it was breathing. Even though it was still alive… it didn't seem to be able to move anymore…

「I have one request.」
「…And that is?」
「After you kill me, finish Luna off as well. It has been suffering for too long… Poor creature…」

…Stop it, me…

…What are you thinking?

「For going along with my selfishness… Thank you, Luna…」

…Shit…
However, it was necessary to confirm one thing.

「There is one last thing I want to ask. In the south of Souven Empire——from here, going south across the Liebe Mountain Range, there was supposed to be a beastkin village. It was invaded by demons… Did you participate in the invasion?」 (Translator's note: Rave Mountain Range has now been changed to Liebe Mountain Range)
「South of Souven Empire… huh? I have no idea…」

——I heard from Arnold-san afterward. The demons who invaded the village were cruel beyond limit. The way they killed everyone, it seemed as if they enjoyed homicide.

「I… don't feel hesitation in killing humans, but I don't partake in it as a hobby… However… I have an idea as to who may have done it…」
「They are…」
「Would you understand if I tell you? …Oh well. If you go south from that beastkin village, you will meet them.」

「——I understand. Well then, you have two options. Choose.」
「What do you mean?」

While receiving the demon's gaze, which was full of suspicion, I pointed to the jaw of the lying abreast mount.

「First of all, I can't kill that mount. Didn't I promise you so? …I won't touch that beast no matter what… After all, you never touched my companions.」
「Wha…」
「When you were going to kill me with that huge Fireball, you said you would keep your words, and you indeed didn't touch them. I can't be the only one to go back on my words.」
「Don't kid with——「…Am I? No, I'm quite serious here…」

My opponent kept her promise. I must keep mine, too.

「If I did that… err… Luna-chan? …would suffer and die groaning…」
「…You…!!」

Looking into the eyes of the enraged demon, I continued.

「You don't accept charity, right? Then, you have to pay compensation.」
「What… do you mean?」
「What I mean is, I will heal that mount, and in exchange, you will have to pay compensation. Furthermore… When it has recovered fully, it may go on a rampage, so it will be your duty to take it with you. If you don't mind, I can heal your injuries, too.」

For a moment, the demon's face turned silly. It really was precious to her.

「Are you in your right mind…? I may cause you harm again once my injuries have been healed.」
「Although the situation is different, are the details not essentially the same as I offered earlier. At that time, you rejected it and contested. Now that you have lost, you have to swallow that very same offer… Even though it may seem like adding to the humiliation…」

After gnashing her teeth, the opponent laughed.

「You… are good with words…」

…Although I would die if she attacked in perfect condition, my overly indulgent life would be settled…

「Oh well. That's only one of the two options. There's another option…」

I budged the thrusted sword a bit and spun those words while forcing a fearless smile.

——Or die? It might be a cool thing to say, but…

「————Or be my pet.」

「Fu… haha- ahahahaha———— …You really are one amusing human…」

——It might be my imagination… but those words of hers didn't have that cold impression.

She stood up with a *goto* sound and threw the large bow onto the ground.
I decided to have the demon temporarily disarm during the treatment.
Even though her Body Arts were a risk… I had no choice but to trust that the opponent would not resist.

——The demon naturally chose the first option.
Actually, the second option was merely for the sake of it. However, if she really chose that, it would then be perplexing.

「Is it fine now? If you told me to take everything off, I would have to abide, but…」
「Eh!? No… It's fine, really… On the contrary, I wouldn't be able to concentrate on healing if you did.」
「Really?」

During that exchange… 『No! It's so embarrassing! Kyaa!』 Well, there was no way that would happen. The demon was probably talking about disarming everything.

I told Lim I would explain the situation later. She had been on alert for quite some time now. I started healing the mount right away.

By the way, my flank had already healed by itself.
The demon was observing quietly from the side. Her healing had been put off.

I extracted the sticking out arrows from its body with one hand. Simultaneously, I applied《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》with the other hand and patched its wounds up.

-——After repeating the process a number of times, only the large arrow fired from a crossbow remained.
Because it had penetrated deep into its body, it would be difficult to extract it with one hand.

「Would you please give me a hand?」

Upon my words, the demon meekly nodded.

「Ah, I understand.」

While the arrow was slowly extracted, I applied《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》with both hands.
The mount groaned a little in pain, but firmly endured.

「——Fuu, the healing of the mount is complete.」

It took a good deal of time, but the healing finished safely.
I gazed at the figure of the mount once again.

Luna, huh… Its race was Griffon. Upper half of an eagle's and lower half of a lion's… right?

As for the skills it possessed,《Claw Arts Lv3》,《Wind Magic Lv2》, and ——《Perception Sensitivity Lv3》…?
Was my Optical Camouflage seen through due to this?

The demon, who had been quiet until now, had her attention drawn.
The mount was ready.

「…Now then, it's your turn next…」

2nd Volume, 7th Chapter【The Final Outcome】3rd Part

Next, the healing of the demon commenced.
First, the gash she received from her shoulder through to her abdomen due to my slash.
The wound wasn't deep, though, because the power had died down during the contest with the Fireball.
I held my palm out to her shoulder, then chest, and then abdomen in order to heal.

The mutual distance between us was close. My hand was moving along the curved lines of the woman's body… However, not a single rude thought rose in my mind…
I wasn't so brave as to get excited amidst the risk of getting my head twisted to 180 degrees in the event of slight negligence.

——When the demon's healing finished safely, too, I spat out a breath.
Out of the corner of my vision, when I saw the demon putting her hand in the sack on her waist, I was alarmed a little.

「…Relax. Here——」

——What she tossed to me was a small radiant white oval… ball?

「…With this, I have paid the compensation. Unfortunately, I don't have a human used currency on me, at the moment. Since you can convert this white magic crystal, it can be considered money in itself.」
「…Well then, thanks.」

I couldn't remember thinking over compensation at all. I stuffed it into my pouch.

「That was for Luna. I would of course pay its compensation… However, that was the last thing of any value I had. As for my compensation… How do I pay?」

Aah… What to do…?

「Even if I have to leave the spear or the bow lying over there, it will be fine.」

Umu
The first thing that came to my mind was a skill.
Either the demon's Body Arts or the Griffon's Perception Sensitivity.
However, because I had already received a jewel as the Griffon's compensation, nothing could be done about it.

Let's say, how about if I send the demon off after taking a skill from her?
I could obviously not tell her about Thief's Godly Skill; however, under incomplete information, the demon would suspect me. Her fellow demons targeting me afterward; thinking of such a situation churned my stomach.

「First off… Forget that today's affair ever happened.」
「Why is that?」
「Don't you think that you crashing here, in Paudal Wetland Belt, is an irregular occurrence? Therefore, I don't plan on reporting it upon returning to the town. You, too. Forget about what happened today. It would be too unpleasant to be revenged by your fellow demons later on.」

I didn't know as to what her status was amongst the demons. However, if she turned out to be a young lady of some big shot, it wouldn't be funny. If they sought me to settle the score, I would seriously cry.

Judging from her strength, she would definitely not be of lower status amongst the demons.
The opponent nodded in acknowledgement.

「I can't think of any compensation right now… As for the settlement, how about granting me a wish?」
「…Fine…」

Saying just that, the demon straddle the back of the Griffon and took off into the air.
Flying dexterously at low altitude, she collected the spear and the bow lying on the ground.
Right after, she turned back and tossed something.

——As for the object… A bone…? Its build was that of a small oblong pipe.

「Once you have decided on your wish, whistle it. Luna's senses are sharp. Further south from here… in the vicinity of what you humans call Uninhabited Area, whistle it. Wherever you are, it will be able to reach me.」

That's right.
She just wanted to tell me how to convey the wish.

「By the way, what should be the scope of the wish?」
「If it's within my scope, I'll be able to grant it……for example, offering this body.」
「That… erm…, what do you mean by that…?」

The bewitching face with which she said that was terrifyingly beautiful.
My expression was same as that of a lamb's in front of a wolf.

「Kuku, I'm just kidding. Don't take it seriously……however, I will grant you only one wish. Afterward, I have no intention of getting along with you. And pray that you won't have to regret like a worthless man for not killing me.」
「Please don't say such a terribly terrible thing with such a straight face… By the way, I would like to ask one more thing…」

As for what I was going to ask, I already had the answer. Just that… it would have more significance if I heard it from her own mouth…

「Is there something still left unsaid?」

「…What's your name?」
「What would you do when you heard it? It's nothing of importance.」
「Knowing someone's name is a form of attachment. Honestly, I don't mean to fight you once more. Please take it as a silly precaution. By the way, I'm Seiji Agatsuma.」

The opponent, who had a discouraged expression about her face, heavily opened her mouth after a brief moment.

「Alba… Alba Mewt…」

Saying merely that, Alba went away at the same speed with which she came crashing, as if it was played back in reverse.
After a short while, only a black dot could be seen.

——Really… She was just like a storm…

「I'm so tired~~ It was too much.」

As it was, my body flopped back like 大.
The moist ground caught me softly.
…Although I couldn't steal any skill, it's fine, isn't it?

Lim was rushing toward me, while I was in such a state. She had a smile born out of delight over my safety, tinged with a color of desire to hear the story.
I thought she would blame me for letting Alba go. However, it didn't seem to be so.

My heart, that was tired after the battle, was healed by Lim's smile.

「————That was why…」
「So, it was that.」

I recounted my conversation with Alba from a while ago to Lim.
Even though Alba herself wasn't the ringleader of the invasion on the village, I didn't think she would understand that easily.
However, the words Lim said next took me by surprise.

「I think Seiji made the right decision. But I… will never forgive demons… Had I been alone, I would have ended up killed. I'm not capable. I was only leeching off Seiji, so it's definitely not my place to get angry.」
「Lim…」
「That's that, but I was rescued by Seiji. Therefore, I'm sincerely grateful to you… Thank you…」

Aah… My persevering was worth it…
That was why I was able to protect her well.

After caressing Lim's head for a while, I patted the side of Rook's neck.
Although it was covered in tough scales, it somehow felt good and raised a delighted cry.

——Well then. Although it was still early in terms of time, I wondered if we should return for today.
I didn't feel like hunting Slimes, and we had enjoyed the scenery already.
Above all, I was tired.

「…Hey, Lim… When we straddle Rook on the way back——can you please sit behind me?」

「Eh? Okay, but…why…?」

「There's no deep meaning to it. Think of it as part of your thanks toward me.」

Although Lim had a wondering look about her face, she nodded obediently.

——Now then, let's return. To the town of Merville.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 8.1

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 8th Chapter【Backs of the Two Conversers】1st Part

Author's note: Happy New Year!
Please treat me well this year, too. m(^^)m

Posting the next chapter as a New Year's gift.
Go ahead.

Due to commodities moving to and from Pascam Port Town, the main road on the western side of Merville was surging with activity.
At noon, because of the people running food stalls on the road, an appetizing aroma was wafting in the area.

Speaking of time, 12 bells indicating noon had just rung.
On a lot in the aisle of stalls, two men were sitting in chairs and eating.

「——Really…? Invasion by demons… Then, your family… Are Millay-san and Lim-chan safe?」

A dog beastkin with tufty haired ears drooping on either sides on his head spoke those words.
The tail behind his waist was dangling off the chair and grazing the ground. The clothes that wrapped his well built body were an embroidered merchant outfit that was weaved abroad. Taking its high price into account, one could infer that his business was blooming.

「Ah, actually, Millay… is dead… Only I and my daughter, Lim, were able to escape safely… I don't know what became of the rest afterward.」

The one who answered the dog beastkin—Doorey—was a wolf beastkin.
Compared to Doorey's body, which couldn't be called lean by any standard, his body was tempered to fully exhibit the physical abilities characteristic of a beastkin.
He was wearing a leather armor. His beast face, that was garbed with combative assertion, could safely be called scary. However, the impression he gave off was calm.
With a height of over 190cm, he was one head taller than Doorey even when seated.

Speaking of his deceased wife, the wolf beastkin—Arnold—indistinctly grimaced.
Feeling the scar on one of his ears with his finger, he spat a breath and waited for Doorey's next words.

「…Sorry… I didn't know such a mishap had befallen. It was thoughtless of me to make you reminisce about it. Damn, if I were there… 」

Doorey used to live in the same village as Arnold. He lost his parents early. A little more than

ten years ago, he decided to leave the village and be a merchant.
Doorey, who had good command of the essentials, spent each of his days in strengthening his ground as a merchant. Although he never returned to the village, his character wasn't detestable.

However, he accidentally met an old friend of his in Merville the day prior.
Rejoiced at the reunion, the two decided on this place to mutually share their situation today.

「Haha! cut it out, cut it out… With such a saggy body, what would you have done? Actually, in helping you escape, I would have ended up killed by the demons.」

Heartily laughing his friend's words away, Arnold violently patted Doorey's back.

「U… gehogeho… What did you say… Back then, I was fairly…」

Doorey objected amidst the coughing fit due to the impact on his back.
However… Even he knew that he wasn't of any use in a battle with a body that hadn't been trained for long and a belly that was flabby.

「Back then, huh? If you, who have been a merchant for more than ten years, jumped in front of a demon, you would be instakilled.」
「Reprehensible, isn't it? Alright, I'll start training over again——」

「——Stop, no… Stop it…」

The enthused Doorey was hit with those still words in a voice that contained a color of gravity.

「Wh-why all of a sudden…」

At the sudden change in tone, Doorey was astonished.

「No… Sorry… However, you should continue to live on as a merchant. Just now, it was all in jest. Even mistakenly, don't make light of demons.」
「…Aah…」

The meaning behind Arnold's serious appeal——Doorey clearly understood.
The wolf beastkin sitting across him wasn't weak by any means. In fact, he was strong.
In the olden days, he might have fought him as an equal. However, those days were more than ten years in the past.
While Arnold was gaining more strength, he was getting weaker.
Even so, the least he could do was save his friend's daughter.
He had never faced a demon before, but the terror was deep rooted.
When all's said and done——his friend next to him was concerned for him from the depths of his heart.

「——By the way, how's Lim-chan doing? I would like to meet her.」

Doorey intentionally tried to switch the topic to change the mood.
From the earlier story, his daughter must be safe.

What Doorey couldn't tell Arnold was that he held love for Millay.
Eventually, Millay tied the knot with Arnold, but Doorey didn't bear any grudge toward Arnold.
Honestly, it was more a blessing because he was close with both Arnold and Millay.

He only remembered Lim as a child; however, he remembered well that she resembled Millay.

「She looks just like Millay-san… so she will definitely become just as beautiful. I'm glad, really glad.」
「Do you mean 'I'm glad she doesn't resemble her father'…?」
「N? That interpretation may be correct. If she resembled you… it would be terrible… 」
「I accept your challenge… you need your saggy body to be beaten into shape.」
「No problem. You will regret making fun of a merchant's guts… So, why is she not here?」

After relishing the silly arguments from the days bygone, Doorey asked again.

「During our meeting, wouldn't I have to talk about the invasion of the village? She… has still not been able to digest that incident… She still gets nightmares about it.」
「I see.」
「Therefore… at the moment, she's enjoying a pleasant scenery.」
「N? What kind of…?」

While wondering at Arnold, who had interestingly loosened his cheeks, Doorey pressed him.

「When we arrived in this town, we met an interesting boy. He's of the same age as Lim, or slightly younger… Actually, he said himself that he was slightly older… Oh well, whatever…」
「A beastkin boy?」
「No, a human. You can't judge the level of his swordsmanship from his appearance. Although he was strong when I met him for the first time, he has incredibly gotten much stronger ever since. Occasionally, we receive a joint quest. Recently, he seems to have acquired magic, too. Even though I have an advantage in physical abilities… it would be difficult for me to win if we fought.」

Doorey was slightly astonished at Arnold's words.
Because a human boy made a brawny beastkin admit that he might not win.
In terms of physical abilities, beastkin were superior to humans.
And Arnold, who had been tempering his body, would be even more so.

If he could still not win, had the other party's abilities reached a point that was on a different level from Arnold's?

To begin with, there were few humans with the aptitude in magic.
Elves, dragonewts and demons were blessed with aptitude in magic. On the other hand, beastkin and dwarves who could use magic were less than rare.

Humans stood midway. Still, the ratio was about 1 person in 20~30 people. Doorey was probing his own memories.

「He does seem to be an extremely terrific boy… How is he related to Lim-chan?」
「He was close to her age, so I asked him if he wanted to become a companion of the depressed Lim. That's how. Lately, Lim has regained her liveliness. It may be thanks to Seiji.」
「Is Seiji the name of that boy?」
「Ah, those two must be eating lunch at this time while enjoying the scenery of the Paudal Wetland Belt.」

Although Arnold was genuinely glad for her daughter's jollity, a mischievous urge was budding inside Doorey.
It could be called a modest revenge for losing in love.

「Fu–mu, so you have already been recognized as father?」
「…What?」

When Doorey caught his quizzical expression, he pursued.

「No, Lim-chan and… Seiji-kun? But…」
「Hahaha, don't be stupid. Those two are just kids.」

He raised his voice as if he was forcibly laughing off the vague unease floating up inside his mind.

「Then, let me ask you……when was it that you became conscious of Millay as a woman?」
「…」
「Maybe your age didn't differ much from those two?」

Suddenly, a crack seemed to develop on the porcelain cup which Arnold was grasping. The next instant——

Vein pops… *BOOM!*

It burst.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 8.2

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 8th Chapter【Backs of the Two Conversers】2nd Part

Doorey, who felt that his prank had crossed the limit, looked at the shattered cup with a faint smile. After offering an apology to the owner of the food stall, he handed over several copper coins.

「——O-oh well, it was just a joke. From what you said, Seiji-kun seems to be a nice boy. It's alright.」
「A-aah, right.」

As if trying to dispel the unrest, Arnold raised the cup, which had nothing but the handle left, to his mouth with a trembling hand.

Observing his state, Doorey's gaze rested on the other party's ear.

「——…Hey, that wound…」
「N? This? Aah… It's not a wound that I received during the invasion by demons. It's an event that happened after you left the village.」
「Ah~… Sorry for the joke just now… Are you okay?」

Doorey asked, while observing his friend's expression.
After learning of Millay's death, Doorey received quite a shock. However, his biggest concern was her family: Arnold and Lim.
That he reunited with his dear friend, there would surely be many inquiries of the past events during the conversation.
He wouldn't be able to bear the burden of making his friend, who had lost his wife, talk about the past anew. Therefore, those words made him worried.

「Don't worry… I'm alright now. I recalled those days when I talked to you, who was a close friend of Millay as well.」
「……」
「…」
「It's a little difficult… But I'm glad at the same time.」
「That again… Why?」

Doorey, who couldn't understand the meaning of those words right away, had a wondering look about his face.

「I knew her… knew Millay well… However, there may be something about her which I'm unaware of. By talking to you, I recall her. Maybe I will be able to discover a completely new aspect of her.」
「……ああ」

「… Aah…」

「I know I won't be able to meet her again——Still… I'm glad…」

Doorey put the raised cup on the table and uttered these words with a downcast face.

「Millay-san was truly lucky…」

He lost his parents early, but he didn't leave his village because of the lingering affection. The partner who he yearned for tied the knot with his friend. Albeit slight, it was a push on his back.
He spent more than ten years to succeed as a merchant. His feelings were stable because he wished for them to live happily from the bottom of his heart.
Still, upon learning of Millay's death, he couldn't keep the accumulation of『If only she had married me and left the village…』thoughts from leaking through his face.
However, such a thought flushed out of his heart.

With this, he was glad————

「——As for this wound… It was when Lim was 7 years old. Millay was on bedrest due to an illness. It was《Red Fever》.」

Red Fever was an endemic disease of unknown cause that tended to occur in the region where Arnold and his family used to live. Upon contracting the disease, one would suffer from high fever.
It was an incurable disease wherein fever would persist for 7 days and 7 nights. If one had weak resistance, they could even lose their life.
There were extremely few people amongst beastkin capable of using magic, and there was no one who could use healing magic.
Even if there were, they would have no chance of healing it via magic if they didn't know its cause.

However, there was a makeshift solution. If you boiled and drank the moss which grew on the shell of a tortoise esque monster《Meditortoise》, that could be found in the village they used to live in, you could bring the temperature down.

「Indeed… Ordinary antipyretic herbs would be ineffective.」
「Aah, although Meditortoise isn't an aggressive monster, it attacks if approached. Moreover, it's quite strong.」
「I have seen it, too… Picking its moss is equivalent to putting your life on the line.」

Nevertheless, it could lower the temperature. When Arnold was about to venture into the depths of the forest, Millay stopped him.

'Don't try anything reckless,' she said because she knew he would keep at it even if there were no such moss.

Arnold was troubled for a moment but nodded to Millay's words in the next. He then devoted himself to nursing her.

——Three days passed. The one who couldn't bear to watch Millay suffering from fever was her daughter, Lim.

『Papa is a coward. I will save Mama.』

Leaving that note, she left for the forest in the night by herself.
Early in the morning, when Arnold read the note, he darted off to the forest.

When he found Lim, she was about to be crunched between the tough jaws of a Meditortoise.
Her small body was bruised all over. Her breathing was faint. She was shouting something while crying.

「And… What happened then?」

Upon Doorey pressing him to continue, Arnold smiled bitterly.

「Although it was really dangerous, both Lim and I are now safe. In the end, one of my ears was torn off… I received wounds at several places on my body, but I was able to save Lim. This wound is from that time.」
「Haa~ so rash… 7 years old? Oh god!」
「I somehow shook the Meditortoise off. When we returned to the village, I was smeared in blood while Lim was crying. When we stepped into the house, Millay was about to faint.」

Thinking back upon it, the beastkin touched his ear, which was partly missing, and laughed hazily.

「But that's what's amazing about Lim. She presented, what she was grasping tightly in her palms, to Millay… What do you think it was?」
「Don't tell me, Meditortoise moss……?」
「Haha! As you would expect of my daughter!」

According to Arnold, Millay had a strange expression which was a mix of anger and delight.

But what Lim received first was scolding for going to the forest by herself. After receiving a slap on her cheek, she started weeping once again.
Millay said,『If you want to do something, the least required of you is your own strength. Do it only if you can do it.』
As to how Lim was able to bring the moss back, it was thanks to Arnold coming to her rescue. Had she been alone, she would have been in the Meditortoise's stomach instead.

At that time, Lim couldn't understand even half the meaning of those words and only sobbed, but now…

But now, Lim could only hold Millay's words close to her heart and say…

『——Thank you.』

When the figure that used to tenderly and lovingly caress her head laid the anger bare, it was an unbelievable sight.

「——Thereon, it took a turn for the worse. Millay collapsed as was due to fever. My wounds kept bleeding. Lim started crying once again. Although the situation was seen through with the help of other villagers, it caused quite a ruckus.」
「That… was quite serious. For Millay-san to say such words… She was a splendid mother. Back then, no one would be able to guess that, considering how reckless she was…」

In 'what?' manner, Arnold enquired the nostalgic Doorey.

「Ah. You may not know this, but when Millay-san was a kid————」
「What… Such words——That fellow said such words…——」

——Arnold kept nodding as if savoring each and every single word of that reminiscence. It brought about tears in the corner of his eyes.

「——Sorry, this is about the only story I have.」
「It's fine. The conversation at the reunion with a long separated friend will surely be a cherished memory.」

As the two talked, time passed.

「Alright, it may be a little early, but shouldn't we move to a place where we can leisurely drink?」
「Your work… Will it be okay?」
「…Aah. If it's today, there will be no problem. Let's drink all the way.」
「…Umu. In that case, I know just the right place.」

The beastkin of large stature stood up, and the beastkin of droopy ears followed.

「So, is your business going well?」
「Appears to be so. I will know the details upon visiting the shop. The trade between Archipelago States and Lechelle Kingdom has been profitable. The trade with Archipelago States was steered by the introduction of a preferential policy. Banzai Albert-sama!」

Albert・Duo・Ballad——was the name of the lord who governed the peripheral areas of Merville.
Although he was a lord, he was current Lechelle King Hardin's younger brother. He could hold an equal exchange with the King; such was their relationship.
He didn't contest with Hardin, who excelled in governmental affairs, for the kingship and settled to the lordship of the commercial town Merville.
With his sound business acumen, he developed trade with foreign countries. He was famous amongst the merchants for playing the part in national power augmentation.

In tandem with Hardin, Albert put forth the policy of preferential trade with Archipelago

States.

「Lechelle Kingdom will soon be through with Souven Empire. They force-sell sub-par farm produce and livestock using military might and dirty tactics. It cannot be called trade!」
「Now, now. Calm down.」
「…Aah. However, the situation will shortly change with this preferential policy. I'm furious because those Souven guys despise other races besides humans. In the first place, it was because of them that we were forced to live down south——…」
「Alright, alright. I understand, Doorey. I'll listen to all you have to say while drinking, so don't yell.」
「Nah, that's all for the rant. Next, I'll tell you about my very first business deal——…」

——Thus, the two walked to the Commercial District.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 9

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 9th Chapter【The Ball that doesn't Fall off the Palm】

「——Thanks as always, Nii-chan.」

Said the shop clerk, who dealt in the mounts, while caressing Rook.
First thing upon returning to Merville Town, was handing the borrowed Rook over.
Today, two people had ridden it already, so there was no need to bring the demon attack up.

「We received a favor from this fellow. Please serve it something delicious.」

Saying so, I handed the shop clerk some extra money.

「Hee~ Nii-chan really likes this fellow. So, what do you think? I talked to you about this before, too. If you buy…」
「Yeah, but I don't have enough money.」

I had about 100,000 Dalas in hand. It was still not sufficient to cover the cost of purchase.

「Well then, I'll be borrowing it tomorrow, too.」

I had no complaint over Rook's ability in the capacity of a mount; however, for the first time, I uttered a few words of displeasure as I caressed its neck before parting.

「——Today, on the way back, you could have rocked a bit more…」
「…Kwuu」

Whether it understood the meaning or not, Rook lightly purred as it stared at me. I headed out of the shop as if running away from that limpid gaze.
It didn't do anything wrong, though.

——By the way, there was still some time till dusk since we returned ahead of schedule.
Nevertheless, I couldn't afford to savor the lingering sensation on my back forever. There were a few things to be done.

「Alright, Rook has been handed over. Let's go to the Guild next.」

I called out to Lim who was waiting outside.
On the way back, I requested Lim to remain silent about the encounter with the demon.

She consented to it, which I was glad about. However, there was a problem. My armor was tattered. Alba's spear had damaged it at several spots. Lastly, the unification of Wind Magic and arrow——《Arrow of the Storm (Mistral Arrow) (※Named it at his own convenience) 》which I received at my flank, had bored a hole into one side of it and out the other.

The piercing wound had been fully healed via magic. The small wounds had already been smoothed out completely via Vitality Enhancement. However, it wasn't the case with the armor.
If Arnold-san were to see my condition, I would immediately be exposed.

Therefore, I planned on buying a new set of armor.
I liked this soft leather armor a lot. It was easier to move in. At the same time, it held reasonable defensive power. Next, I intended to look for a similar armor at Jig-san's shop or have it repaired.

Of course, it required money.
Lim felt herself responsible to cover for the cost of the armor; however, I politely declined.
I was far off from buying Rook, but it didn't mean that I was troubled for money.
Besides… Even if Lim had not jumped at the opponent, the battle would have been unavoidable…

As for the reward, I was more than satisfied with Lim's smile, a 'thank you' and the lingering sensation on my back.
With that, I could even withstand two《Arrows of the Storm (Mistral Arrows)》. No, three.

Well then, I must reflect on the spiritualism alone in the night.
Let's return to the story.
Together with Lim, whom I had requested to at least accompany me shopping, I headed to the Guild.
The reason being, I wanted to find out the value of the White Magic Crystal which I received from Alba.

《White Magic Crystal》——A jewel that can store magic inside.

Via Scholar's Knowledge, I somewhat knew what it was used for. However, I didn't know its price. Because there was a Materials Trade Counter at the Guild, it may be outside Sheena-san's domain. Still, she should be able to answer us.

「——You… found something valuable again…」

While looking at the oval jewel, Sheena-san murmured.
The feminine elegance in her earnest eyes, with which she stared at the jewel, was different from her usual 'business smile'… Is it 'that'?
Are women weak against jewellery regardless of which world it is…?

I, who would get enchanted by the beauty of the dazzling lustre of a metal, had no right to criticize her.
——I saw an illustration called the《Legendary Metal》in the library. The yearning I felt was probably the same.

After tepidly watching Sheena-san for a while——

「——! …Excuse my rudeness. The accurate value of the White Magic Crystal, which Seiji-san

is carrying, is difficult to be evaluated. However, the White Magic Crystal of such a size is transacted in white gold coins, surely. Please wait a minute… The jewellery shop is in the vicinity of the Commercial District centre——」

While catching Sheena-san, who was taking out and showing the map, with the corner of my eye; I was meshing the meaning of her words just now.
Transacted in white gold coins——means its value would not be below 100,000 Dalas.
Seriously…? The value this one small jewel was more than what I earned in a whole month…?
Despite being so small it could fit into a palm? Preposterous!

According to what I was told after the location was marked on the map, White Magic Crystal was a scarce jewel that was only rarely mined. It was mainly processed into jewellery. Due to its magic storing utility, it was highly priced.

Because the ratio of humans who could use magic was quite low, the powerless nobles used it for self-defense purposes.
As for the strength of the stored magic——shouldn't it depend on Magic Skill Lv? ——It depended on the size of the jewel.
Considering Alba owned it, she could store fairly strong magic.

「Erm… Can you tell if magic is currently stored inside this White Magic Crystal?」

It would be terrible if a great Fireball were to explode inside the Guild, so I would have to prevent it.

「Yes, of course. If you hold the White Magic Crystal up over your head and peek inside——…Although it shines brilliantly, it should turn transparent…」

I held the White Magic Crystal up over my head, under the light penetrating through the window. When I peeked inside as I was told, it was indeed transparent.

「If the White Magic Crystal had magic stored, a peculiar gleam could be identified inside. In case of Fire Magic, red… or something like that… Besides, even if magic was stored inside, there would be no issue as long as you didn't will it to invoke.」

Will it to invoke—— In other words, will for the magic stored inside the White Magic Crystal to release.
A word could be assigned as a『key』by the person who stored magic. Upon chanting it, the power of magic could be unleashed by another person.
By the way, through the degree of shine, the strength of stored magic could be ascertained to some extent.

「Those who store magic leave some sort of signature of their magic. Mostly, that signature is used as is as a key.」

… Like a name, huh? I get it…

In other words,
The nobles who purchased the White Magic Crystal would request a mage to store magic.
For example, if I stored《Ball of Fire (Fireball)》, I could set《Ball of Fire (Fireball)》as the『Key』.
In a pinch, if a noble were to stroke it and chant《Ball of Fire (Fireball)》, magic would invoke and burn their opponent.
However, the keyword needed to be learnt prior. If the White Magic Crystal were snatched, wouldn't it be impossible for the opponent to use it?

If this White Magic Crystal had magic stored inside, it would be troublesome. No one but Alba would have the key——… As to what use the stored magic would be for, I didn't even want to imagine…

Anyways, I could use all elemental magic. Therefore, since the White Magic Crystal could be sold for high, there would be no problem in converting it to money.

After expressing gratitude, I tried to leave the Guild.

「——Now that I think about it…」

Upon catching Sheena-san's voice, I turned around.

「Because White Magic Crystal is an expensive jewel that can be used for self-defense, a small sized one is processed into an accessory and gifted to the love interest as a lucky charm… There's such a tradition…」

I see. That's lovely.
Oh well. Alba, who cast it away, would have not even 1 micron of such a blissful feeling. Also, the demons would have no such custom anyway.

「If I received such a lovely present from Seiji-san, I would faint out of happiness.」

Wha…t…?
Although it was a voice that was familiar to me, the words that infiltrated my ears couldn't be more unfamiliar.

What… is she talking about…?
Whatisthispersontalkingabout?

No, calm down. I must not mistake it as Sheena-san's rare 'dere'.
It was obviously a trap. She just wanted to toy with me.

「Err, please stop teasing your junior. Wouldn't it be terrible if the kid took it seriously?」
「Because it's Seiji-san.」

Just how serious was the *kusukusu* reservedly laughing Sheena-san?
…n… This person is unpredictable…
In a sense, she was scarier than Alba.

Sheena-san turned back to her serious self, lowered her head and said with a flawless ‘business smile’.

「I apologize for inappropriate behaviour during work hours. But Seiji-san was asking about things outside the scope of my work——… So, it’s a draw…」

When I saw Sheena-san grinning———— it felt like I had been defeated.

「——n, Is something wrong, Lim?」
「…Not at all…」

When I turned around to leave the Guild, Lim was silently peeking at me.

「Well then, should we go to the next place?」

From there, we walked along the main street to the north. Destination: The Jewellery Shop.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 10.1

2nd Volume, 10th Chapter【The Blue Eyed Girl and the Gentleman at His Prime】1st Part

——So, this is the jewellery shop, huh…
It had been a while since I established Merville Town as a foothold of activity. However, there had been no opportunity of visiting such a shop thus far.

There was a fashionable signboard depicting jewellery. Although it was a stone building, it wasn't evoking a sense of uncouth; owing to the sculpture by the wall.
In short, it was a shop I would be too embarrassed to enter by myself.
I was glad I had Lim with me.

I grasped the handle of the door, took a deep breath and pushed it open.
No, no. The reason as to why I was nervous was because I was here to sell a high value item.

I had no such concept as Sheena-san telling a lie (※Sheena-san was allowed to trick), so I was certain that its price was to the extent of being transacted in white gold coins.

For this reason, however, the chances of getting ripped off were considerable.
Therefore, I should first have solicited advice of the only merchant I was acquainted with, Batteau-san. I would not get scammed so easily, though. Also, it was their job.
Oh well. It was needless to be worried of getting swindled at such a legitimate shop in such a big town. If I sold it at a price I was convinced of, I would have no reason to regret over it.

I entered the shop and surveyed the interior.
What I imagined was a spectacle of glass cases ubiquitously exhibiting jewellery, but it was not so.
There was a long *fukafuka* fluffy fur carpet laid out on the floor. The wall was adorned with what could be called interior decor. However, there was not a single article for sale on display.

If so, do I have to ask the shop clerk, and he will show it to me?
Actually, it was happening right in front of my eyes.

Besides Lim and I, there were four people inside the shop.
Behind the counter were two shop clerk-sans——an elderly man and a young woman.
The seeming visitors, whom the male shop clerk was dealing with, were two as well.

The face that was peering into a gorgeous ornamental case dedicated for the jewellery was rather childish.
The girl, who glanced our way just once, was literally a little girl.
Well arranged facial features, blonde hair and blue eyes; on top of that, Tateroll [Ringlets] hairstyle to finish off the Ojou-sama『Princess』look.
The dress-——lines appeared as if there was something round concealed in the lower half——a ball dress? ——The frilly sky blue fabric matched her clear white skin fairly well.

Although her expression was that of a poor lamenting, if she had to be described in one word, it would be a living『Artistic France [French] Doll』.
As for her age… She had yet to reach 12…
To think she would be shopping at such a shop. Preposterous!

…Ah, oops. I refrained myself from peeking at her status on our very first encounter…

Oh well. As for what I had already viewed, nothing could be done about it.

Or rather, is this girl really the lord's daughter?
Well, it was understandable.

Then, is the man next to the princess her father? Or so I thought… however, it was different…
Not because I peeked at his status, but because his attire was different.
As for what was different, after viewing him from 360 degrees, only one word came up——『Butler』.

A rufous vest on top of a white shirt; a black suit which differed only slightly from the suits I had seen before; and a black necktie… If that's not a butler, then what is?
A well arranged moustache; long silver hair tied behind; and auburn eyes that momentarily glanced our way.

He consciously looked at the subconscious me.
As for his age… 45?
Eh… he is! Who is he? A combat butler?
Actually, it was a possibility at this age… If you took only the Skill Lv into account, it would be the current mine's match…
Previously, he might temporarily have been a mercenary. Or he might be such an existence as escort-cum-butler. After all, Arnold-san had the ability equivalent to a Rank B even though he only just became an Adventurer.
By the way, although I had been monologuing for a while, it had only been a few seconds since we stepped in.
I slightly bowed to the princess and the butler, so as not to appear impolite.

I proceeded to the female shop clerk who seemed to be free.

「I would like to sell this. How much can I get?」

Albeit only slightly, the female shop clerk was startled upon seeing the White Magic Crystal which I had taken out of my sack.

「Please wait a minute.」

Saying just that, she walked to the male shop clerk.
They're one unit, huh?

「——Lim, I know that you know, still.」

「Un」

'Where did you get this?' in case that question was asked, the two of us had decided as to what we would answer.
Actually, it was something surprisingly simple. Something along the lines of, 'I healed an injured mount and received it as a token of gratitude.'
It wasn't a lie. Also, it wouldn't be doubted if I proved my social status as an Adventurer.

……Oh?
You told me to wait a minute. Why are all of you coming here?
The princess and the butler-san, who were asking for the elderly man's assistance in buying an exorbitant jewel… were approaching, too…

「Ara! It's real!」

A shrill voice peculiar to a girl resounded inside. When the princess' gaze rested on the White Magic Crystal, which I brought with me, she grabbed it and said so.
…Don't tell me I'm about to be robbed!
Those who called someone else's possession theirs; this princess would not be an owner of such humanism, surely.

「Erm——」
「Marita-sama, it belongs to this gentleman here. Without even a greeting… such conduct is not admirable…」

Before I could cut in, the butler-san chided the princess, seized the White Magic Crystal and put it back on the counter table.

「I-I know. Can't I even get a little excited?」
「If so, very well.」

The princess, the standing of whom was clearly superior, couldn't defy the butler-san. It was quite amusing. I was looking at the princess while holding my laughter back.

「What…?」
「No, nothing.」

Being laughed at probably hurt her feelings.

Woah! This girl is pretty scary.
——While I was thinking that, the princess clasped the hem of her dress with both of her hands and greeted impeccably.

「I'm the Lord Albert・Duo・Ballad's daughter——Marita. He's the butler, Logins・Crowe. Excuse the impoliteness just now.」
「Nah, it's fine…」
「Now that it's behind us, Logins shouldn't have any issue.」

The princess, my first impression of whom was that of a tomboy, could act like a princess, too, huh?
Although Logins-san was sullen, with the princess' relaxed tone, he nodded and greeted us.
When Lim and I were done introducing ourselves, Logins-san explained the situation.

——Fumu… The self-defense crystal, which had been processed into a pendant, had shattered due to an unforeseen accident (※Marita was the cause).
They were looking for a replacement. However, they were troubled with only the small ones.
Right then, I came with a large White Magic Crystal… That was the gist…

I wasn't sure as to how tough a White Magic Crystal was, but it wasn't something that could shatter just like that. What the heck did she do?

Well, I would sell it if they wanted. After all, that was what I came here for.

「Erm, how much would you buy it for?」

She was the daughter of the lord. She would buy it at a generously high price——
My hopes shattered the next instant.

「Ara, I'm unable to set a fair price. Didn't you come here to sell in the first place? If I bought directly from you, I would feel bad for the shop's staff.」

Oh well… It seemed to be her honest opinion…
If the shop bought it, they would first have it processed into jewellery by an artisan from the Industrial District and then set the price of the finished article. Only then would they be able to make profit.

If I sold it directly to Marita, she would have to rely on a skillful artisan for the finished article.
In the latter case, the shop would be out of loop.

However, wouldn't Marita be incurring loss in the former case?
The price of the finished jewellery would be quite high.
No, these might be the words to keep me from hesitating to sell the White Magic Crystal and further increasing the price.
Oh well. There was no need for me to behave in such a petty manner as to hesitating and increasing the price.

Or rather, racking my nonexistent brain and reading the other party's though pattern was unbecoming.
Although she looks shrewd, what do I have to be seriously worried about a 12 year old kid for?
Therefore, I brought my train of thought to a halt and requested the male shop clerk to proceed with the sales procedure.

After showing my Adventurer ID, I inquired the amount.

「Let's see… Such a size isn't readily available on the market… So, how about 350,000 Dalas…?」

……Wha?
Before I could restart my brain, that had hanged, Marita spoke to the male shop clerk.

「Hey, although I have expectations in regards to the price after it has turned into a finished article, shouldn't its price be a bit higher?」

Are you… serious…?
I was caught off guard by the first offer, but then came an attack.
Marita was an awful kid.

「We cannot hope to match Marita. Then… how about 380,000 Dalas…?」

This time, Marita smiled as if she had agreed.

「In a business, everyone should stand to gain. You must endeavour to put a smile on everyone's face——is what my father always says. I found something I was looking for, so I'm glad. This shop will be able to gross profit, too. And you——」

Suddenly, Marita turned around and pointed my way.

「Will be able to sell at a slightly higher price. Isn't it great?」

As if saying, 'I have completely recovered from the earlier disgrace,' the way she stuck her nonexistent chest out looked charming.

No way… Isn't this princess a nice princess…?
To conclude with merely that, I might be considerably soft.
I refuse. Although I could use all elemental magic, I didn't have such an element as that. That was why I persistently believed she was a nice princess.

When I was about to consent to the offered amount, Marita spoke once again.

「By the way, where did you get a White Magic Crystal of such a size?」
「Marita-sama, he might have been blessed with such an opportunity due to being an Adventurer. That question was intrusive——」
「Ara, it was just on my mind.」

Even though Logins-san was trying to restrain her, it didn't seem like her curiosity could be suppressed.
Time to tell the story, that we had agreed upon, of how I obtained this White Magic Crystal.

2nd Volume, 10th Chapter【The Blue Eyed Girl and the Gentleman at His Prime】2nd Part

「——Such a profusely generous person, no?」

These were not sarcastic words… It seemed to be her honest opinion…

「That mount was probably very important to them.」
「Fuun, do you carry some expensive therapeutic medication?」
「I can somewhat use magic, so I can reasonably heal wounds.」

Whether my words piqued her interest or not, she removed her hair ornament and passed it my way. Although I was perplexed, I received it. What kind of thing is it?

「Albeit only slightly, I'm curious about you. That hair ornament may look small, but there's a White Magic Crystal processed into it. If you're that good, why don't you load it with your magic?」

I get it. However, although humans who could use magic were few, they should not be rare.
I had no idea as to what piqued the interest of a girl merely in her early teens, but whatever. Fine.

Also, the White Magic Crystal processed into this hair ornament was quite small.
Even smaller than my pinky's nail.

「Err, yeah. What would happen if a White Magic Crystal were loaded with magic beyond its capacity?」

Going by Sheena-san's explanation, the strength of magic stored inside a White Magic Crystal depended on its size.
It was Logins-san, standing by Marita's side, who answered my enquiry.

「In that case, the White Magic Crystal would shatter.」

Such a scary thing was said with such a straight face.
Hey, hey! If I broke it, wouldn't I have to compensate for it?
However, even if I returned the hair ornament, It didn't seem like she would take it back.

「Of course, I won't complain even if it breaks. Okay?」

Houhou, in other words…
She thinks that magic of a mere youngster cannot possibly exceed the limit, huh?
I mean, isn't Marita the young one here?

Then, so be it. I will show you the abyss of my magic!

I grasped the hair ornament tightly. With all my power, I invoked the greatest and the

strongest magic of absolute destruction——nope,《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》.
It would be scary, if it accidentally discharged.
If it were this magic, it would be safe, so I decided on it.

So……it must be called, after all, huh? It was probably be impossible with merely a thought.
However, the White Magic Crystal processed into the hair ornament cracked and shattered.
Shouldn't it not break if I regulate the intensity of magic? Yet it ended up broken when I thought about destruction.
I was concerned about accidental discharge, but the stored magic dispersed as if it fused with the mana in the atmosphere.

It was not my fault.
Still, with a guilty conscience, I silently returned the hair ornament to Marita.

She probably had no intention of accusing me like she earlier claimed. Next, she picked up the White Magic Crystal which I brought with me.

「I will take full responsibility if it breaks. I want you to do it once more.」
「…What kind of magic should I load…?」

Even I believed it wouldn't break.
Therefore, I had better hear as to what kind of magic she wanted.

「The magic you have the most confidence in.」

Magic that I have the most confidence in… huh?
Then, it would have to be the one I only just learnt.
I wouldn't have to be worried about accidental discharge either. Alright, let's do this.

No, wait.
For argument's sake, even if I successfully loaded it, wouldn't a human who could use Origin Magic… who could use a composite element encompassing all elements at that be extremely rare?
Maybe she will laugh out of excessive self consciousness and throw it away…?

——A short while of indecision.
Oh well. I don't think it would be bad if I piqued the interest of the lord's daughter.
Actually, it was quite important to get acquainted with influential people and build connections.
Of course, if it were someone of rotten character, I had better avoid eye contact, so my eyes wouldn't rot. If it were Marita, it would be fine… I think…

Besides, I had already decided to enjoy my life in this world, Iris.
I didn't want to die early, but I didn't want to live an ordinary life either.
Take a game for example. If there were no events in the game, it would be boring.

…Let's do this…

I grasped the White Magic Crystal, invoked six elemental magic in order, and refined each to one step short state.
It was taking a good deal of time…
After having carefully completed the groundwork, I directed my consciousness to my palm and let mana sublimate into magic all at once.

「…Fuu…」

——It seemed to have gone well.
When I held the White Magic Crystal up and peeked inside, I could discern a six colored gleam.
When she received it, she was initially startled. As if fascinated by the jewel, which was sparkling like a rainbow, she could only-

「…So beautiful…」

-Murmur that.
Logins-san must be wondering「What kind of magic is this…」, too.

…Ah, I just remembered that I had to visit Jig-san's shop, too, so I decided to leave.

「Well then, we will be off.」

The price of the White Magic Crystal was supposed to be 380,000 Dalas. However, because Marita was in a good mood, she bumped it up to a final price of 400,000 Dalas.
Four white gold coins, huh… Shouldn't I just switch jobs from Adventurer to Miner?

Jokes aside, after leaving the jewellery shop, Lim and I headed to the Industrial District on foot.
My entire fortune was about 500,000 Dalas.
Even if I purchased Rook, I would have a lot in spare.
With this, I could do as I please at Jig-san's shop.
I didn't mean that money wouldn't last overnight, but it was a world fraught with dangers. If it could be used, it had better be used.

「——Even if you bought a better armor, it would be absurd to lose your life the next instant!」

Receiving Jig-san's words『E-Even if you put something better on, danger would still be danger☆』with thanks, I bought a new set of armor.

What he recommended me was a cloth armor made by weaving the Black Steel Thread, which was tougher than low grade metals, spat by a spider-esque monster called《Gran Spider》, that was native to Aesha Continent.
As the name of the material would suggest, it was black in color.
Lately… Jig-san would understand my taste even if I didn't tell him…

Because the cloth armor contained cushioning inside, it could block not just slashes but

blows as well.
Furthermore, it contained Mythril fragments to protect such parts as shoulders, elbows and knees. It cost a total of 180,000 Dalas.
An excellent item would obviously cost a lot. An armor contributed greatly toward survivability.
Even if it were expensive, I would not compromise.

Now then, here I was facing Feeder Pops' in the state of heightened tension. The reason being, I recalled a certain something.

The thing is… Although I loaded magic into the White Magic Crystal at Marita's behest, I forgot to teach her the words of invocation.
In which case, it would be unable to be used for self-defense.

——Oh well. What can I do?
If it were needed, they would say something.

…Come to think of it, I had quite a few encounters today…
The two of us rode Rook, encountered a demon, then a battle broke out. The two of us rode Rook again, encountered the lord's daughter, then I piqued the princess' interest.

It was already past 6 o'clock.
Indulged in 'I wonder as to which of Dario-san's cuisines I will be having for shime' thought, I opened the door.
(Translator's note: Shime – last meal when going restaurant hopping)

What entered my line of sight was a wolf beastkin, Arnold-san. Sitting across him with a well built body was… a dog beastkin? However, they were reveling drunk.
Dario-san, who was carrying liquor to the two of them, stopped and called「Welcome back」out upon seeing us.
What greeted us were three middle aged men.
…What's going on?
I know this inn is called Feeder Pops', but…

For the whole inn to be filled with pops getting fed.
Un… Totally…

Thereafter, we forced our way to the middle, took our seats and had dinner with everyone.
The cuisine was exceedingly delicious as ever. Doorey-san——the dog beastkin whom I met for the first time——relished at eating.
Doorey-san seemed to be from the same village as Arnold-san, but he was now active as a merchant.
I got to hear various stories. However, when the conversation proceeded toward the humans of Souven Empire, whom they didn't have good impression of, they turned agitated.

Fumu… I would have to be careful of humans who called beastkin beasts (※Contemptuously suggesting that they and animals were one and the same kind)

I didn't think there would be such people.

——Thus, the dinner came to an end without them learning of the events transpired at the Paudal Wetland Belt.

Lim returned to her room while Arnold-san and Doorey-san continued to drink.
As for me, because I was tired, I decided to retire to my room. Right then——

Someone's hand emotionally caught my shoulder.

When I slowly turned my head back, I found Arnold-san smiling with a liquor jockey [stein] in one of his hands.
…I get it. I would have to accompany them even if I couldn't get drunk…

After we took our seats back and drank for a while——the unusually restless Arnold-san asked me.

「N, jun…Thanks for taking Lim along with you today. And… there, nothing, happened… right?」

Upon hearing the question, I almost sprayed the liquor, which I was trying to gulp down, out.
This is bad… Has my fighting a demon somehow been exposed…?
But there was no sign of him suspecting the new armor.

No, wait.
He couldn't have heard it anywhere. There must be something on his mind, but it wouldn't come out.
I tried to feign composure as much as possible.

「Nothing worth mentioning. Are you talking about something specific…?」

After our eyes crossed for a while, Arnold-san burst into laughter.
Simultaneously, he *bang* patted Doorey's, who was sitting next to him, back.

「Kuhaahaahaa! I knew Doorey was thinking too much into it.」
「Geho! No, I told you it was a joke.」

Although I didn't know the details of their exchange, Did Doorey-san find something unnatural in Lim's and my story…?
A merchant's keen eye… scary…

——Thus advanced the night of an already long day.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 11.1

2nd Volume, 11th Chapter【The Good Ol' Balloon】1st Part

Author's note: Finally, that man……!

——7th month, 1st week, the day of Origin.

Even after keeping them company to the late hour drinking bout last night, I casually strode downstairs. So, it's the effect of Abnormal Status Resistance, after all, huh?
Last night, Doorey-san decided to stay at Feeder Pops'. However, for the sake of temperance, he was already in the dining area.

「Yo! Morning, Seiji-kun.」
「Good morning.」

The moment I returned Doorey-san's greeting, Lim could be seen coming downstairs, too.
Umu, as for Arnold-san, it will be the same as always, I guess?
Well, drinking without restraint is inevitable after reuniting with a long separated friend…… right?

After the three of us were done with the breakfast. I told them I would be leaving for the Paudal Wetland Belt and rose from my seat.
Because it was the day of Origin today, I would have to go hunt the Prism Slimes. I would be shopping quite extensively.

「Fumu, I'll be in this town for a while. If you need something, let me know.」

Last night……he did say that the trade with the Archipelago States would be more active if the new policy were enacted. Therefore, he would be stocking commodities up before it was too late.

「How about you, Lim-chan? If you're free until Arnold gets up, why don't you go to the market with Uncle? I'll give my friend's daughter a present.」
「Thank you very much, but……I'll wait until Papa wakes up.」
「I-I see……」

Politely declining Doorey-san's invitation, Lim went upstairs lightly *tatata* just like a cat.
The tail of Uncle, who was left behind, drooped so low it was rubbing against the floor.
Close friend's daughter would look just as cute as one's own daughter, surely.
Because Doorey-san wasn't married and had no child, such feelings would be even more pronounced.

「Then, I'll be off.」
「Ah, wait……here, if you're going out, how about you take this for the journey?」
「This is……?」

What he held out was……a colorful candy?

「It's a confectionary made in a certain village of Lechelle Kingdom. There, sugarcane grows abundantly, so it's their specialty product. It's popular as a commodity, too. I hope you try it a little.」

It was a candy that was faintly red and yellow in color——it was interestingly shaped after a bird and a sheep esque animal.
I received it with thanks and left the inn.

Through the Guild, I went to the mount shop.

「——Oh, you're actually buying this fellow? I mean, it's amazing considering you're so young.」

I shoved the white gold coins in the shop clerk's face (※Courteously paid the amount) and finally made Rook mine.
After receiving pointers on how to keep a pet, I caressed Rook.
Apparently, it could be left here in case there was no shed for the mounts at the inn.
Although it would cost a little money, I was glad I could get on Rook whenever and go wherever I wanted.
I vigorously jumped on Rook. With my heart overflowing with desire, I forcefully gripped the reins.

「——Oou……somehow, the view is different.」

Although it was strange, since I was used to the journey of where I was heading to, I was feeling refreshed.
I always used to borrow Rook. I didn't know I would experience such an exhilaration when I owned it.
Like someone, who always rented a car, would feel upon buying a new car of their dreams……they would cry.

After loitering more than usual around, I reached the Paudal Wetland Belt. Slightly vigilantly, I searched the vicinity.
It's not……what you think it is. I was concerned about getting surrounded by the demons in retaliation of yesterday's incident.
However, my worries seemed to be unfounded.

Well, well. Time to once again chase the runaway slimes with Rook.
Thereafter, I repeatedly stole Origin Magic from the coalesced Prism Slimes. When it was about time to return home, I got off Rook's back and unsheathed the sword.

「Should I try it once more?」

I directed my consciousness to my palm and manifested a rainbow colored ball.
A clear image was required to manifest magic. However, because I had already spent considerable time on fusing all six elements, I seemed to be able to control it fairly well after

getting a hang of it once.

I clad it on the sword as is and held it aloft.
After confirming there was no one around, I aimed at the swamp field so as not to destroy the nature.

————Multi Elemental Extreme Sword Wave (Symphonic Rave)!

The moment the sword attack, which I fired with all my power, came into contact with the surface of water——the sound of impact, which seemed to be making the air tremble, transmitted to my body.
A column of water soared into the sky——the surface of the swamp, the depth of which was shallow to begin with, was lying naked. Water was whirling into the small crater like hole which had just formed.

……I'm so scary!

The joke I just cracked was actually in moderation. From now on……I would have to take time and place into account before using it.
Even though Origin Magic was merely at Lv2, the power was terrifying.

Whether Alba used all of her power to finish the wounded me off with the great Fireball or not, I wasn't certain. However, considering what transpired yesterday, it seemed to be equivalent to Lv3.

By the way, I shot the rainbow colored ball prior to the sword unification, too. Although it was powerful in its own right, one could clearly perceive the power down.
Do other factors contribute to the sword unification, too……? What comes to mind is the Lv of my Sword Arts? Or the attack power of the sword I'm equipped with?
Or does the unification with a weapon one is accustomed to results in more precise image?
……That's all I can think of.

Oh well. I decided to return for the day.

——When I was reporting at the Merville Guild, I was informed by Sheena-san.

「You're Rank D+, Seiji-san, but your quest completion count has reached 10. Do you want to take the Rank Promotion Exam?」
「Ah, yes. I do.」

I see……Rank C Promotion Exam already, huh?
Ever since becoming a Rank D, I had been regularly hunting the Slimes for about a month.

It was an incredible speed even if I say so myself.
Although I had plenty of safety margin, a Slime was originally a difficult opponent for a Rank D Adventurer.
Even though it was small, it could use magic. It would constrict the opponent with its fluidic body and suffocate them. Even if they somehow cornered it, it would plan an escape and

coalesce with another Slime. After power[ing] up, it would restart attacking.
Even if they defeated it by the skin of their teeth and returned to the town, one meager nucleic bead wouldn't cut it for the quest completion.

Here, there was no such thing as Lv up upon defeating monsters. Once they realized their inadequacy, they would have no choice but to train and gradually improve their technique.

「Not many people sit for the Rank C Promotion Exam, so it's conducted individually. Therefore, it's easier to set the schedule. Do you have any request in respect of the day?」

Previously, the Rank D Promotion Exam was a group examination. However, it seemed to be different this time around.
Every Adventurer starts as a Rank E, is that why many people sit for the first examination?
It was a pyramid structure; the higher the rank, the less the number of people……in a way, it was a miniature society.
Well, it was natural since it was one organization.

Tens of thousands of people lived in Merville Town. In the suburban towns and villages, people lived in the denomination of hundreds and thousands.

In such a large town as Merville, people registered with the Guild numbered about 200.
More than half of them were Rank E and D……those of higher rank were handful. In Merville, the vicinity of which wasn't infested with brutal monsters, high ranked Adventurers were extremely rare.

「Early schedule if possible, please.」
「Very well. As soon as arrangements with the examiner have been made, we will contact you.」

Will it be Bays-san this time, too……? Nah, he couldn't be free all the time. It would be someone else this time around.
I'm certain she mentioned that examiner quests were issued for high ranked Adventurers.

——And then came the next day. 7th month, 1st week, the day of Fire.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 11.2

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 11th Chapter【The Good Ol' Balloon】2nd Part

The moment I turned up at the Guild, I was informed that tomorrow had been decided to be the day of the exam.
It might be my imagination, but Sheena-san's face suggested she was a little worried, yet she cheered me up saying「If it's Seiji-san, it will be alright.」
Have I drawn some strict examiner…?

By the way, per my life cycle [routine] these days, today was supposed to be a day off. However, I had no intention of spending the day before the exam leisurely.

I went to the South Forest, where I usually walk to, with Rook. To prepare for the exam tomorrow, I hunted Smagobs and Caterpillars.

「Alright… This should do.」

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank D+)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv3 (14/150)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (6/150)
・Sword Arts Lv3 (28/150)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (42/50)
・Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (33/50)
・Light Magic Lv2 (36/50)
・Origin Magic Lv2 (12/150)

That very same night, Dario-san wished me success in the exam by treating me to the best of his cuisines.

'Fry the Salt Cow's, a cattle that grows up grazing in the coastal pastures, meat in the fragrant spices and vegetables (the meat contains moderate salt). For further depth, add the Alma Chicken bouillon.'
'When the soup base is ready, toss a variety of vegetables in. Then, *kotokoto* simmer it. Don't forget to add the accent of wine.'

Lim's and Dario-san's conversation felt as if she was learning the recipe from him.

The soup, which I was gobbling up in a trance, seemed to be made so.

Surely, quite an effort was put in the main dish, fish meuniere, too.
Not a single slice of the fresh fish, which was transported from Pascam, had lost its flavor. A technique was used to preserve the insides, certainly.

It was so good——I was about to cry. Really.

——7th Month, 1st Week, the Day of Water.

I went to the Guild early in the morning and waited till seven bells rang.
The flow of this area was the same as last time.
However… Strangely…
The examiner had yet to appear… Even though it had been a while since seven bells rang…

Did I possibly make a mistake in respect of time?
Since I was getting anxious, I tried to ask the staff. Right then——

「——Fucker… Ain't you that sissy from back then?」

What was that…? Although it was nostalgic, it was a hoarse voice which I would never want to hear again.
Who is he…? No, how could I forget him…
When I was a fledgling in this world, who knew neither right nor left, a man served me unforgettable humiliation and an exceedingly convenient Skill——

Slowly, I lifted my gaze from his feet to his face.

——Bal･Goliath

No, he can't possibly be the examiner, can he…?

「Fucker, you sitting for the Rank C Promotion Exam?! Whatever… I've been chosen to be the examiner this time. Don't waste my time. Let's start right away…」

Serious…ly? I don't want such an examiner.
In the criteria for an examiner quest, the Guild needed to include character, too, not just rank.
Aah… Is that why Sheena-san had a worried expression?
Or rather, with which mouth are you telling me 'don't waste my time' after coming late?

「Don't stand here like a fool! Quick, move!」
「…Okay…」

I, who was in an absentminded state, was made to walk to the training area inside the Guild.
Just like last time, my ability would be assessed here.

Bal's, who picked a practice axe up and was vigorously brandishing it, figure reflected in my

eyes.

「This time, I'll be the one to decide the method of the exam. What I believe is… An Adventurer who is not strong should start from the scratch…」

"Zugonn!" He slammed the axe into the ground.

「Aah… Fuck! Ever since that day, my body has been in bad shape. Whenever I see your fucking face, I get irritated. I have only been receiving petty volunteer quests. The Guild isn't pleased… Fuck! What a joke…」

He completely vented his anger out. I was the cause of it all, though.
However, returning his skill to him was simply not an option.
Fumu… Is his demotion imminent? Or is an examiner quest petty?
Well, there was no client in case of an examiner quest. The Guild would pay each and every coin by itself. Therefore, a senpai [senior] was expected to pitch in and give a helping hand to a kouhai [junior] free of charge.

「Prove your strength to me. If you do, you will pass.」
「Er…m, would it be okay if I won?」
「Hah! Try it if you think you can. You piece of shit, who gets along with the beasts, lemme see how pathetic your abilities are.」

Eh, b, east…?
For a moment, I couldn't get as to what he referred to. Then, Doorey-san's words replayed slowly inside my head.
In Souven Empire, humans who bore hatred for beastkin were many… Indeed——

「A beast will always be a beast. Aah, those are called beastkin, too, right? I seriously doubt the intellect of a guy who receives a joint quest with those.」

Is he perhaps talking about Lim and Arnold-san…?
I had indeed received joint quests on a number of occasions. He must have gotten wind of it.

「Wait a minute! You don't possibly have a cat fetish, do you? Well, if the partner were a beast, even a pussy could have a go—— 「Err, Balloon? San, was it… May I?」
「An?」

I interrupted his words and continued mine.

「Albeit for the time being, you're my senior Adventurer. I thought I would give you due minimum respect, but…」

I set the practice sword up to midsection. While staring at the opponent, I spat the following words out.

「This much will do for the introduction. Get ready right now, you fucking piece of shit. Is your brain smaller than even a Green Caterpillar's? You want me to beat you till you cry? Are

your inflated muscles full of air, you muscle balloon?」
「You got some nerve, eh…」

「You————have made me angry.」

「——Umm, Seiji-san… That was quick. What was the result of the exam…?」

I opened the door to the training area, came out and reported the end of the exam.
The following were the opponent's words, so there wouldn't be any issue.

「I seem to have passed. The examiner is still lying in the training area; you can confirm with him.」

——Hence, I achieved promotion to Rank C.
The exam was over unexpectedly early, so I thought I would take a day off, but…

「Alright, from now on, Seiji-san will be a Rank C- Adventurer. By the way, we have been entrusted with a message under the name of Marita・Duo・Ballad…」

Together with handing over the updated Guild Card, Sheena-san conveyed a name. I had too much of an idea as to whose name it was.
Finally~… I mean, why had there been no word till now…?

「Seiji-san and Lim-san are to turn up at the lord's mansion. I conveyed them that you were in the midst of an exam. I was told that after the exam would do.」

Why Lim, too? Because we were together at that time?
The tone didn't suggest that an immediate appearance was required, so it was alright.

「Erm, have Lim [and Arnold-san] turned up at the Guild?」
「They have yet to appear today.」

They were still at the inn, probably.

「Then, if you see Lim, convey it to her on my behalf.」
「Very well. If you see her, please convey it to her on the Guild's behalf.」

Author's note: As for what happened…

Bal was beaten till he cried.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 12.1

2nd Volume, 12th Chapter【The Small Confession】1st Part

「——I, too…?」

When Lim tilted her head in puzzlement, her cat ears softly wavered.
She could already be seen in her outfit, but Arnold-san who was lying in the bed could be seen in his pyjamas.

——After passing the exam, I returned to Feeder Pops' and visited the room Lim [and Arnold-san] were staying in.
This was in order to convey Marita's message that she was to turn up at the lord's mansion.

By the way, regarding Arnold-san still lying unconscious, he hadn't been exposed due to quaffing heavily.
Earlier, he revealed at drink that he would stay by Lim's side in the night, for she still got nightmares.
Today, too, did he not sleep until early morning and stayed by the bed? It's alright… I understand.

「guoooo……gugaaaa……——」
「……」
「……」

…I couldn't take Lim without permission, but I would feel bad if I woke him up.
In the end, we left a message with Flower-san, who was on the first floor, and left for the lord's mansion.
We could travel downtown on Rook, too. However, because there was pedestrian traffic, it wouldn't be able to pick up speed, so we decided to go on foot.

「——Upon looking up close, it really is magnificent~」
「It's beautiful, isn't it?」

Constructed close by the centre of the town was the lord's white mansion. Numerous pillars of chalk, like those in a palace, assumed the appearance of a gate.
On either side of the large door at the entranceway, silhouettes of the guards could be seen.
When we approached with a slightly tensed expression, we were expectedly called to a halt.

When we mentioned the name of Marita, one of the guards retreated inside the mansion for verification.
After we waited for a while… the one who appeared was the butler from before——Logins-san…

「Please come in.」

Under his guidance, we advanced down the mansion.

As you would expect, the house the lord lived in was amazing.
Carpet was laid out on top of the floor made of… polished marble? Through the apertures in the corridor, expensive looking paintings could be glimpsed. The ornaments infused with fine craftsmanship could be seen.

If I cut the marble via Earth Magic and carried a few ornaments home, how much could I get…? Such an imprudent idea didn't occur to me because it was a magnificent space…

The guards could be seen patrolling inside the mansion, too. Considerable effort seemed to be put in the defense.
After we finally arrived outside a room, Logins-san greeted the person standing by the door before we went inside.

Earlier, I remarked that she was a living France [French] doll… The color of the furnishings, the variety of the furniture, and the finesse of the articles in the room were befitting a beautiful doll…
The light pink curtain of the canopy attached to the bed was gently swaying with the wind seeping in through an open window.

When I looked toward the window where the wind was blowing in from, I caught sight of a girl reading a book in a small chair before a soothing brown desk.

「——Ara, you're here earlier than I thought you would be. I heard you were in the midst of an examination.」

Marita shut the book she was reading close, turned around, and spoke.

「Yes, I came here as soon as the exam was over.」
「…And then, did you fail?」
「Although it ended quickly this time, I successfully passed. However, I'm still a Rank C-.」
「Eeh, congratulations. By the way… Do you know why I called you today?」

Of course… I knew…
Because I could see a pendant giving off a rainbow hue around Marita's chest.
Aah… As to why there was no contact for days, I was able to guess she would call me for the words of invocation when the jewellery was ready.

「Well then… Should I have you teach me? I like this lovely rainbow color, so it's fine as it is.」
「Marita sama, it wouldn't be able to be used for self defense in that case.」
「…I get it…」

Since I was inadvertently thorough in this regard, I decided to obediently teach her the words of invocation.
I was feeling really embarrassed. In this world where magic exists, am I the only who feels embarrassed?

「Doesn't it sound a bit odd? Sympho————」

「You don't have to say it.」
「…Would it invoke even if i didn't say it? Unless I chant to invoke it…」
「No, there's no such meaning to it.」

I forcibly interrupted the words that were about to come out of Marita's mouth.

「Umm, what kind of magic is this?」
「I… can use Origin Magic… You can think of it as an offensive magic that I use.」

Upon hearing it, the two were speechless——not. They nodded in an 「I see…」 manner.
Huh…? Their reaction was weaker than I expected…
Shouldn't it be a bit more?

「Don't misunderstand, I'm quite surprised. Those who can use Origin Magic are rare. Rare even amongst those who hold aptitude for magic. However, I have heard that it takes more time to improve Origin Magic compared to other magic owing to creating composite elements. Therefore…」

Worried that I would be feeling dejected, Logins-san cut in and followed up.
It was unusual, though. Isn't Origin Magic recognized as superior to all?
Origin Magic was indeed more difficult to level up than other skills.
If I were ordinary, would I be no more than Lv3 even after becoming a grandpa? I would cry.

「Therefore, how much power do you reckon is inside? To shatter the White Magic Crystal processed into the hair ornament, the strength of magic was indeed great. However…」

Marita held the pendant up and asked while peeking inside.
To be exact… The magic I loaded into the hair ornament was《Light of Healing (Light Healing)》…

「It has… reasonable power…」

I wouldn't go so far as to say that this rainbow light-ball was comparable to a Lv3 magic in itself.
That aside…
I had to tell Marita something. Something very important.

「Err, yeah. There's one thing I want to say.」
「What is it?」
「The White Magic Crystal in that hair ornament『didn't break』————I『broke』it.」
「……」
「……」

2nd Volume, 12th Chapter【The Small Confession】2nd Part

——Well then, now that the place has quieted down, should we leave?
When I turned my heels, I was once again called to a halt by Marita.

「Stop right there. You were not called here for the specific purpose of teaching the words.」

…Hey, hey. Don't tell me I have to pay the compensation?
However, it was dispelled.

「Do you two have no intention of resigning as Adventurers and working at this house?」

So, that was why we were called, huh——…
I'll pass.
It was important to build the connections with influential people, but it didn't mean I had to be bound.
I hadn't enjoyed this world enough. The social status as an Adventurer, who could roam unfettered, was fitting for me.

Besides, wasn't it a little careless to employ a mere Adventurer all of a sudden?
I might be thinking too much into it, but… Were the few days of no contact a period to inquire into our basic sentiments? That couldn't possibly be…

「Sorry, but I have no intention of resigning as an Adventurer. Lim, too…」

When I turned my sight, I found a head *furufuru* shaking.

「Well then, may I help you with some other business——」
「Please wait a moment… Marita-sama… How about we honestly request them here?」

Logins-san nimbly stepped forward in front of us. After peeking at Marita, he continued.

「Seiji-san is a rare Origin Magic user… That sword on your waist must not be for decoration either… At such a young age, it is exceedingly commendable. Lim-san, too. Just because you're young, the power of a beastkin cannot be underestimated… That said, if we disregard your age, people with the same level of abilities can be found anywhere…」

If the abilities of a Rank D or C Adventurer were considered, it would indeed be so.

「The reason as to why Marita-sama is interested in you two——」
「It's fine, Logins. I'll say it myself.」

When Marita turned around, her cheeks were slightly blushed. In a voice that sounded like a bashful mutter, she told us the reason.

「I haven't gone out of this town. Actually, it's rare for me to even leave this house.」

「Eh, but last time…」
「That was because I had requested to Father that 'I' would like to choose the jewel, which 'I' would be wearing, at the very least.」

An overprotective parent. However, when Marita was talking about her father, the mood didn't suggest that she disliked him.

「Therefore, I have very few friends of my age… Actually, I don't have any… So, I took interest in you two, who are not far off my age, even though it was our first meeting…」

I see. In other words, she wanted someone close to her age whom she could talk with… She wanted a friend?
Well, Lim would be better because I was six years older than her [Marita].
Still… Compared to Logins-san, I was much younger…
Considering the age group of those around her, she would indeed not mind 'slightly' older.

「In other words… you want someone like a friend?」
「What about it? Is it wrong?」

It was slightly unexpected.

「It's not wrong. Then, why didn't you honestly say so from the start?」
「I… don't know anything about the world outside, but I intend to learn a lot from the tutors or books. The people called Adventurers accept quests and receive rewards. I know about their livelihood, too. Therefore… I thought I would pay in exchange for listening to their stories.」

Aah, because she only reads books in the house, is that why she looks more mature than her age? At this point, it was necessary to tell her one thing straight.

「In the relationship called friendship, money doesn't exist.」
「That… may certainly be so… Then… honorifics don't exist either, right?」

Marita bloomed into a smile.
Wasn't it so easily said?
Here, if I got carried away and dropped honorifics, wouldn't Logins-san『Insolent!』just kill me?
Even more so, after realizing that this person was wearing a slender sword; Wasn't he a butler?

「…Going so far in expecting the adventure tales would be troublesome, but there would be no problem in coming here every now and then for storytelling.」
「Un, that would be enough.」
「Still… To have never gone outside, are you not being overly protected? Don't you goshopping with your mother?」

Father, being the lord, would be busy with his work. However, mother and daughter must be on good terms——

「When I wasn't even 1 year old… Mother passed away. That's why Father cherishes me so much, I think…」

What do I do? I seemed to have stepped on a landmine.
Even though my legs were already full of wounds.

——I, who had somehow succeeded in changing the topic, thereafter told Marita a few adventure tales.
What especially piqued Marita's interest was the exhilaration of riding Rook and bustling about. Or was it the scenery of such a place as Paudal Wetland Belt?

As for Lim, she talked about me, Arnold-san, and Mister and Missus Dario… She hardly talked about herself. That said, the attitude of earnestly stepping up could be seen in her.

I wonder if it had to do with their mutual aspect of both of them having lost their mothers, or has she started recovering from the shock of the attack on the village?
It was a good thing.

'Because the fish we ate back in Pascam Port Town was so tasty, I learnt a fish recipe from Dario-san, but it didn't go so well'——and so on. It developed into a warm conversation.
It was not an adventure tale. Rather, it was a conversation which the girls of the same age would normally hold.
Above all, because Marita was enjoying it, it was for the best.

At the black tea which Maid-san brewed and served to the room, Logins-san nodded seemingly satisfied.

By the way, Logins-san had been working at the lord's mansion for more than ten years. He had been looking after Martia in one way or another ever since she was an infant.
'Because his abilities stand out, he serves also as a guard'——These were Marita's words.

'It's fortunate that we are on good terms'——I thought, while sipping the black tea, the flavour of which was extracted at the right temperature.

2nd Volume, 13th Chapter【The Rolled off Candy】1st Part

From Merville stretched four main highways.
Thereby, the gates were set up at four passages: east, west, south and north. If one advanced all the way up the northern highway, they would reach the Royal Capital Iris.
The western one led to Pascam Port Town, eastern to Veronica Citadel Town and southern to Wide Citadel Town respectively. While en route down these highways, existed divergences [sub-highways]. If one advanced down these sub-highways, they would be able to reach small towns and villages.

Wide Citadel Town was the largest town in the southern part of Lechelle Kingdom, the role of which was to supply goods to the fort built to prevent the demon invasion.
En route down the highway which extended from Merville to Wide existed a road diverging to the west. Situated a little down the road was a village of 200 population——Lana Village.

In Lana Village, sugarcane was actively cultivated. They sold sugar refined from the sugarcane. They also sold confectionary made using the sugar.
Because the climate and soil were suitable for growth, the harvest could be expected within a year of the planting season.

Lana Village——

「——Minii, it will soon get dark, please have everyone gather. Also, stack up the harvested sugarcane in the usual place.」

The one who called so out was a woman in the latter half of her twenties——Eleanor.
She had never worn expensive clothes, yet she gave off a neat impression of overflowing cleanliness.

「Un, I'll convey it to everyone.」

The girl, who replied so, was 7-8 year old. However, the behaviour of dependence stemming from childhood couldn't be detected in her.
Eleanor nodded at Minii's reply and returned to where she came from.
Moving her small limbs, Minii ran about in the sugarcane fields and told other children to finish their work off.

「Is that so? Thanks Minii. After we have stacked up the harvested sugarcane, can you please inform the uncle?」
「Un」

A boy the same age as Minii——Roy, said so while holding a bundle of sugarcane.

These boys and girls lived in an orphanage in the outskirts of Lana Village.
They were the children who had lost their parents to the monsters, diseases or

demons——and met the destiny of orphans.
A number of towns and villages had such orphanages, that accepted orphans, constructed. However, they had to earn money for their livelihood by themselves.
Even though they were too young, they assisted in harvesting the sugarcane. The small remuneration they would receive from the farmers would be set aside for the operating expenses.

「——Welcome home. Put the dirty clothes in the basket over there. Also, because it will soon be dinner, can you please clean the top of the table?」

Eleanor received the kids, who had returned, and issued quick instructions.

「Eleanor-san. This.」

What Minii handed over to Eleanor were coins which she was grasping firmly. While having her head caressed, she received「Minii is a good child」praise.

「…Alright! Everyone, as a reward for your hard work, eat tasty stew till you're full.」

Even though it was modest, it was a life filled with laughter and noise of the kids.
While Eleanor was satisfied at such a sight, she unconsciously recalled the days bygone.

Eleanor had experienced the life in this orphanage as a child. Now, she held the position whereby she had to look after them.
Just that everyone who lived together back then had gone their separate ways.
There was a girl who was slightly older than her. She was a sister like existence to her. The fortune she was blessed with was inconceivable.
However, now that she [the girl] had turned into an existence whom she [Eleanor] could never meet again, she [Eleanor] doubted she [the girl] was blessed.

「Even the cause of her death wasn't announced…huh?…」
「…Is there something wrong? …Eleanor san?」

Looking at Eleanor, who seemed to be murmuring something, Roy asked after dumping the stew in his stomach.

「No, nothing. That aside, how was the stew today?」
「Very delicious. Most importantly, it was full of meat. Was there a mysterious donation again, perhaps?」
「U~n, there was, indeed. Just who in the world sends it?」

Many merchants would visit Lana Village to purchase sugar… Occasionally, however, they would deliver a donation with an『as per request』message.
'A former resident of the orphanage? But…' guessed Eleanor… However, she couldn't understand as to why they would keep their name secret.
The sack of coins would include a flower. She remembered seeing it somewhere, but…

「Oh well. I would use it with gratitude. After all, savings would be needed for the sake of

the kids' future.」

——The chain of Eleanor's thoughts was cut off with a knock on the orphanage's door.
Since they were in the outskirts on the village, it was rare for the villagers to visit them. Even more so at such a time as after the dusk.

「Who could it be? At such an hour…」

Telling the kids to carry on eating, Eleanor left to attend the door.

「Coming. Who is——」

Eleanor had just begun to say when she sensed abnormality.
They were covered from head to toe in black mantles. They had masks put on, so their faces couldn't be identified——Clearly, the group didn't belong to the village.

「Y-You, who——」
「Don't move… If you make any noise, I'll kill you… Just follow our orders. If you do, you will not die. If you don't, everyone will die including those damn kids behind you.」
「What… do——」

Eleanor, who had a knife thrust at her throat, leaked a clueless voice.

「Don't speak unnecessarily. If you are going to follow, reply so in one word.」
「…Y…es…」
「Good… Everyone, come in…」

In an instant, the peaceful sight inside the orphanage was crushed by the bloodthirsty air.
Some of the kids, who were unable to grasp the situation, burst into tears upon seeing Eleanor's stiffened face and the alien group.

「Stop crying, brat. Tell everyone to act normal.」

The indifferent voice of a man from behind the mask continued to give orders.
They had to behave normally so as not to alert the villagers outside, it seems.
Which means the kids would have to leave for work tomorrow per norm. However, if they leaked too much [information], Eleanor and everyone would die.

「——Got it? Well, if you leaked too much, the villagers would die, too. Don't forget; you're constantly under watch.」
「Let… Eleanor-san… go…」
「R-Roy…」

Shouting so, Roy scowled at the man in black.
Seemingly fed up, the man sighed and becked [beckoned] the subordinate next to him.

「Roger.」

A muffled voice of a woman reverberated from behind the mask. From under the mantle, she retrieved——a whip.
The moment the woman's hand was perceived to have moved——Roy's body experienced a floating sensation.
The whip, which had coiled around his feet, pulled him in front of the overbearing man.
Without minding the groans from the impact of hitting the floor, the man lashed out a kick into Roy's abdomen.

「Gi…a…a」
「This will naturally happen if you speak unnecessarily. So… What would be an appropriate punishment for a defiant brat…?」

When the man moved the knife on Eleanor's throat a little, a red droplet trickled down her skin and plopped onto the floor.

「S-Sto… am sorry…」
「Or… Would you understand clearly if I killed a brat close to you?」

When he [the man] murmured in Roy's ear, he [Roy] subconsciously turned his sight——

「No… I'm s…cared…」

He saw Minii's trembling figure and teary eyes.

「I won't do it again… So, Minii…」
「——There won't be a second time.」

When the kids who had quieted down were moved to the bedroom, one of the group members voiced.
It was a relaxed voice unbefitting the brutal ambience.

「But Captain~ will this go well?」
「Don't worry. Because I know that guy the best…『Whatever you do, do it efficiently』I learnt the meaning of these words from her…」

The body of the man, who was trying to suppress the sneer, shook.

「You should follow the captain without thinking about anything else. Just like those kids.」
「Cruel~ Each of Sis Rei's words stabbed into my chest.」
「…No pointless chatter. Tomorrow, you will follow me. Others will stay here on standby. If that guy acts strange, don't show mercy to the kids.」
「「Yes!」」

「Well… If you want to blame someone, blame your own king and that man.」

The man sat down on the floor and spat these words at the dumbfounded Eleanor.

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2nd Volume, 13th Chapter【The Rolled off Candy】2nd Part

His consciousness sunk into the bottom of gloomy darkness. In a mysterious space where the sensation of his body seemed sparse… He got up…
——Aah, this is a dream.
Even though he was aware of that, he continued to gaze fixedly at the scene unfolding in front of his eyes.

「——Why are you all doing this?」
「It's a mission we were assigned to.」

Words spat out of his mouth regardless of his will.
It was an event that had already transpired. It was merely a playback of the memory.
It felt uncomfortable to have his consciousness buried in his past self.

「An aristocrat's lady like you shouldn't think of worrisome things when you can return safely.」
「Aristocrat… huh? I see… But… I have yet to feel like one myself…」
「……」

「You may not believe me, but I'm originally from an orphanage. When I was proposed to by my husband, many were surprised. However, the one who was surprised the most was I. I wonder as to what he saw in such a commoner girl as me.」
「…Is that so?」
「Hey, since I'm restrained and we have a lot of free time, why don't you tell me your story? Wouldn't it be boring to simply kill a hostage? In what manner were you brought up for you to turn into such an inhumane human being? 」
「You talk too much… Keep quiet…」

Right then——As if the chunks of memory pieced together, the scene switched.

「——Hey, if a war broke out between your side and Lechelle, what would you do? Wouldn't you be in trouble if that happened?」
「That won't happen. Our military strength is overwhelming. If the troops of Lechelle invaded us after crossing over the Liebe Mountain Range, they would be annihilated. They are well aware of that.」

Having said so… The man continued his words…

「Likewise, it would be difficult for us to invade Lechelle Kingdom. Veronica Citadel Town is a natural fortress which naturally utilizes the Liebe Mountain Range. Thereby, we are maintaining a cordial relationship without forcing any dispute.」
「Considering my current state, it doesn't seem『cordial relationship』at all, don't you think?」
「Between two countries, there can never be a relationship of equality. They would always try to build a relationship favourable to themselves.」

「It's this method… which I'm against…」

「——Do you know about a flower called Phylia? It's a lovely white flower.」
「It can't be a flower which grows gregariously in Lechelle Kingdom… Surely…」
「Ah, I knew you would reply to my question. These past few days, out of those who were standing guard, you were the only one who would reply normally.」
「……」

「As a child, I saw that flower only once when a peddler came to the village. I was so happy when I found out that it had the same name as me.」
「…Is that so?」
「The other day, I sowed a seed in the garden at the mansion. I hope it grows big.」
「It's a western plant. It's suitable for scarce rainfall climate. If it were given excessive water, it would wither.」
「Hee…You're knowledgeable…」
「It will be convenient for my work if I learn about various cultures.」

「——Do you have a family?」
「…I don't…」
「Well, I didn't have parents either, but I was never lonely because the guys at the orphanage were just like my family. Especially a girl who was slightly younger than me. She was just like a little sister to me——」
「You really… talk too much…」
「But you know what? I now believe that a real family is a true blessing. An affectionate husband, an adorable daughter… I'm so lucky. Although my daughter is not even 1 year old yet, I'm certain that she will grow into a pretty girl…」
「If they accept our demands, we will release you safe and sound.」
「Is that… so?」

「——Apparently, they are showing signs of accepting our demands. You'll soon be released.」
「He is a very kind person… So, you thought it would be effective to target me.」

Having said so——she continued her words.

「When my husband proposed to me, do you know what he said?」

Upon her abrupt question, the man waited silently for her to continue her words.

「——'I want to make Lechelle Kingdom wealthier and more peaceful. Even if I put my whole life into it, I may not achieve it. However, I'm glad that I have your support'——That's what he said.」
「What are you saying all of a sudden…——?!」

The woman darted off and rammed her body into the window.
It was possible, though, to close in and intercept her at this distance.
However, the moment the woman turned her head back——the man's body stiffened for a

moment.

「This is the only support the current me can offer him. If the hostage is dead, my husband won't have to comply with whatever you demand.」

People wouldn't choose death for themselves… just like that…
Yet that woman's eyes were honest to the very end.

「I have one last request. Please——don't involve my family in this anymore.」

「Sto——!!」

The hand he stretched caught but air.
He knew it. He knew it very well. That it was already over.

「——Kahaa… ha… fu… haa」

The man, who had woken up from the dream, kept his eyes shut. He didn't move for a few minutes.
He endeavoured to calm his breathing that was so rough and his heart that was beating so loudly as if it was fiercely hitting his insides.

「In the end, I can only indulge in self satisfaction, for that's my character…」

The man's muttering voice was drowned out by the sound of the bells.

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——7th Month, 2nd Week, the Day of Fire. Overcast.

Because Rank C and above quests had lessened within Merville, I decided to raise Abnormal Status Resistance to Lv3 for the time being.

Since today was supposed to be a day off, I would enjoy going back to sleep after six bells.

I was sleepy all the more due to thinking over something late last night.
As to what I was thinking over… What do I wish from Alba?
There was no need for me to get impatient. However, I would forget it if I left it as is.
A demon doing something for you was not an everyday occurrence, after all.

If I made her my pet… The whole town would be thrown into an uproar if I did such a thing…
The other day, I read a book,『Demon Dissection: New Edition（※Contains Speculation）』at the library.
Their typical physical features, such as horns and wings, varied. However, they had red eyes in general. Therefore, demons would be identifiable at a glance.
That, in my opinion, was the reason as to why Lim recognized Alba was a demon and attacked her even though her [Alba's] form didn't differ much from a human's.

I, who had woken up before seven bells to the *tonton* knock on the door, managed to

successfully crawl out of the bed and show my face to the visitor.

「Lim… What is it?」
「Seiji, you said it would be your day off today… Will you not go to Marita's place with me?」

——After that day, Lim and I went to meet Marita once more. Although it was no more than showing face, Lim unexpectedly got along with Marita really well.

「N, huh…? What's that in your hair, Lim…?」

I didn't miss the small gold hair ornament shining in her chestnut hair which her cat ears were enshrined in.

「Umm, Marita told me that I should put more girly things on… So, I bought it the other day. How… does it look?」
「She was right. It looks good on you.」
「Un… Thanks…」
「Then, let me change into my outfit. After we have eaten breakfast, we will leave.」

…After I had shut the door close, I banged my head on the bed four times…
Evil! Thoughts! Go! Away! (Translator's note: 煩悩 (Bonnou) – Kleshas, in Buddhism, are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. Kleshas include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. 退散 (Taisan) – Disperse)

2nd Volume, 13th Chapter【The Rolled off Candy】3rd Part

——After I had cleared my mind, we visited the lord's mansion once again. Logins-san met us the same way as last time. Greeting the guards, that is.
Although Marita seemed to have informed the lord, he was not able to meet us most likely due to the pressure of work.

Nevertheless, Marita seemed to respect her father a lot.

To the extent of saying「It was nice of Father to concede the throne to Uncle Hardin even though he [her father] had the calibre of a king…」
Well, he must have his reasons.

Now that Lim and Marita were playing in the garden which was enclosed within the mansion, Logins-san and I were the only two left in the room.
Thus, I was calmly gazing at the silhouettes of two girls playing with each other… It might be thought of badly… So, when Maid-san brought the seconds of black tea, it was a good timing to get the conversation rolling.

「Logins-san, have you really been working here for a decade…?」
「Yes, I have been under their care for a very long time.」
「Then, is your family in Merville?」
「No, I have neither a wife nor kids.」

「——Frankly speaking, there are many amongst us maids who yearn for Logins-san.」

The one who cut into the conversation with a grin was Maid-san.

I see. An unmarried old man who had refined manners, had outstanding abilities, had a job… would be popular amongst young maids even though their ages were miles apart…
She put quite an emphasis on『us』… (Translator's note: He said, "she put quite an emphasis on『watashi』-tachi." where watashi means I and tachi is a pluralizing suffix. Combined, it means 'we')

「Carrying hopes of chancing upon the same luck as Phylia-sama, us maids exert ourselves at work——」
「Vun… I'm merely a poor decrepit…」

No, no. What matters is 'unmarried' and 'job-holder'… don't you think…?
By the way, about 'Phylia-sama' mentioned just now… Wasn't it the name of Marita's mother? Maid?

「Excuse me, was Phylia-san… a maid…?」
「Yes, but I have been working here for four years, so I have only heard of the story. Originally, Phylia-sama worked at this mansion as a maid. Albert, who fell in love with her at

first sight, married her.」

It was indeed a fairytale to maids.

「It's common for nobles to make a move on maids for the sake of playing around… However, Albert-sama had no intention of remarrying after Phylia-sama's death because he truly loved her…」

Maid-san talked about love with fascinated eyes.
The eyes that were locked on Logins-san.

「There is absolutely no doubt about that. By the way, in my opinion… A woman who does her work diligently is amazing…」
「…! Well then, I'll have you excuse me. I have still a lot of work to do. Please don't think that I'm passing time. Well then…」

Instantly, Maid-san left the room.
Can I… have such a charm…
As a person?

「——Fumu. Although he cherishes Marita so much so that he is overprotective of her, it might only be a fragment of how much he cherished Phylia-san.」

On the way back from the lord's mansion——I nodded upon witnessing the white flower which Lim, who was next to me, was holding gladly in her hand.

「That is?」
「It's called Phylia flower. It has the same name as Marita's mother… She gave it to me when I said it looked beautiful… I thought that I would decorate Dario-san's inn with it.」

The dining area would certainly look brilliant if it were decorated.
——!

「Lim, watch out in front of you!」
「…Eh…? Ah——」

——*The sound of people colliding*
At the same time, something – which the one who Lim bumped into was carrying – rolled off onto the ground.
Quickly, I tried to pick it back up and apologize. However…

「Hey, hey. Who are you bumping into? Sis Rei is so scary~ if you don't pay damages in full——it hurts!」
「…You… Why are you doing something so conspicuous? Come here so I can beat you!」

Actually, you are already beating him.
The classical conte was presented by the woman who collided with Lim and the man who was next to her.

Both of them had black hair and black eyes… It was a pair that gave off an asian chic impression…
Their faces were exactly the same… twins? Both of them had the same attractive face. Now in case of the woman, it induced a healing effect. However, in case of the man, it evoked envy.

…I should not observe such things. First, I must apologize…

「Sorry.」
「I'm sorry.」

When we expressed words of apology, the woman held her raised hand back.

「No, it's fine. It was just a candy, which I liked a little, that dropped. It's not much. There's no need to pay compensation either.」
「Sis Rei, can't you still eat it after brushing the dust off?」
「Shut up. Why don't you eat it yourself?」

From a distance, someone could be heard calling the man out.

「Ah… We have some business to take care of. Well then…」

And then, the twins (※presumably) mingled into the crowd in quick strides until they couldn't be seen anymore.

「If you don't pay attention in front of you, it will be dangerous.」
「Un… Sorry…」

Even though she was dispirited, she didn't let the Phylia flower drop as she continued to hold it firmly.

「Well, it's great that the flower is safe… n?」
「What happened?」

I picked the candy, which the female twin had dropped, up.
Where have I seen it before…?

Aah, it was the same candy as the one I received earlier from Doorey-san.
According to him, it was a specialty product of some village.
It was quite tasty, but it was now covered in dust, so it couldn't be eaten. How unfortunate.
Although it was wasteful, I directed my consciousness to my palm and invoked Fire Magic.
It was trash——Therefore, it must be disposed off via incineration.

The candy, that had turned to mush inside a small ball of fire, disappeared as if evaporated.

「Let's head back home, Lim?」
「Un」

Author's note: This is what Seiji's current status looks like:

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank C-)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv3 (23/150)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (6/150)
・Sword Arts Lv3 (32/150)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv3 (0/150)
・Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (33/50)
・Light Magic Lv2 (44/50)
・Origin Magic Lv2 (20/150)

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 14.1

2nd Volume, 14th Chapter【The Designated Quest】1st Part

※A part of the 14th chapter has been included in the 13th chapter. There's no change in the basic storyline. (Author's note)

——7th Month, 2nd Week, The Day of Light.

While humming, I was washing Rook's body.
There was a space inside the mount shop dedicated to washing the mounts. So, here I was *washiwashi* rubbing its body with a deck brush.
A hose extending out of the water supply——since there was no such convenient thing here, water had to ordinarily be fetched from the well in order to wash…

「Nah~ it's convenient.」

However, I poured the water produced via Water Magic on Rook. Since wetting the area was allowed, it was pretty convenient.
I wondered if it could be used as drinking water, so I tried to drink a little… Well, there was no reason for it to not be drinkable…
Still, well water seemed to be tastier.

「I was finally able to raise Light Magic to Lv3. You made it possible, Rook… So, thank you…」
「Kuooo」

I was glad that Light Magic leveled up, but it was a turnoff that there were few quests within the scope of Rank C.
A Rank C monster, although an existence dangerous beyond limit to general public, didn't appear frequently in the periphery of Merville.
A few days back, I received a Rank C quest which required subjugation of a monkey-esque monster《Assault Ape》. It took two full days to encounter and defeat it.
I had to stay overnight in the village that issued the quest. It was so terrible (※Before the encounter).

However, at the skills that it possessed –《Physical Arts Lv2 (3/50)》and《Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv1 (8/10)》– I couldn't help but drool. I successfully ate the delicacy that was Physical Abilities Enhancement.

That the brutal monsters were rare in the outskirts of the town… It was reassuring in itself…
That said, if there were no quest, there would naturally be no reward.
I could just receive a low rank quest and make money by selling the materials ripped off of the monsters, but my Adventurer Rank wouldn't be able to go up in that case.
Adventurer Rank played an essential part in proving the social status. For superiority and recognition that came along with the high rank, I had to raise it.

Should I switch my base to a different location…?

While pondering over such matters, I was done with washing Rook——so, I left the shop.

「——Huh? Logins-san, what are you doing here?」

I called out to a familiar person in front of the Guild building.

「Yes, I came to the Guild to issue a designated quest.」

Err, an influential figure like the lord uses the Guild, too?
He could employ the soldiers to settle the issue. However, for him to commission an Adventurer, the situation didn't seem to be a common one…

「Ah, Lim received a pretty flower the other day… Err…」
「Was it… the Phylia flower?」
「Yeah, that one. We put it in the vase for decoration, but it seems to have withered…」
「Because it was a flower cut for a long time. However… enveloping it in a wet cloth would do. Since it's a flower that would wither if it were given excessive water, its cut-end must not be drenched. It happened to me, too, when I plucked it.」

Fumu, I see… I must tell Lim when I return…

「Seiji-san…」
「Eh? Ah, yes?」
「No… Nothing…」

What was that? It was unusual for Logins-san to be inarticulate.
Although I waited for a while, he didn't continue any further. Saying「Well then, I'll have you excuse me」he left.

——At the Guild reception, I handed the nucleic beads over to Sheena-san. While her hands offered me the money, her mouth offered me the words of「Congratulations」.

「There is a designated quest for Seiji-san and Lim-san from Marita-sama.」

…Ah, so that was why…

The designated quest was literally a quest designated to an Adventurer. It could be said to be the first such quest after I became a high ranked Adventurer.
Although the Rank was not totally unrelated, the Guild had to recognize the honor of receiving a quest from the lord's daughter personally.

As for the details, because Albert-san would be on a trip for a period onward from tomorrow, we had to go to refill the defense of the lord's mansion… Something along the lines…

I see.
Doorey-san was restless because it would soon be the day a treaty would be signed with a delegate of the Western Archipelago States. Since Albert-san was spearheading the policy,

he was supposed to attend the signing ceremony along with the King.
Doorey-san had been reciprocating between Merville and Pascam to stock commodities in a company warehouse at the port. He wished he would be able to earn a risk-free profit.

Fumu. Because Albert-san would take some guards along on the trip, would the defense personnel be insufficient?

Since her friends wouldn't accept money on the silly account of being friends, she approached them officially through the Guild, so they would have to accept.

「——We accept this quest.」

——7th Month, 3rd Week, The Day of Origin.

Usually, I would leave for the Paudal Wetland Belt early in the morning. Today, however, it was different.
I didn't have to weigh between a Prism Slime and Marita.
Pr… Marita…
No, really.

——Hence, Lim and I were currently in Marita's room.
Arnold-san was concerned about Lim receiving this quest. However, when Lim said she would, he didn't pursue it any further.

That said… My amateur estimation couldn't find the defense of the mansion to be lacking…
Isn't there not even one guard missing at the gate and in the corridor? …It made us want to ask if we were at all needed…
Albert-san would consider such a matter, certainly.
Did Marita perhaps issue the quest because she wished for people whom she could talk with?

'No, no. work is work.'
'If I keep *pechakucha* chattering, it will serve no purpose.'
…I resolved anew, yet Marita approached me innocently for stories…
How could she act like a kid at such a place as this…?

While remaining vigilant of the door at the entrance to the room, I *tetete* approached Lim who was close by the window.

——Time passed uneventfully… It was soon lunch time…

Somehow or another, I knew I wasn't cut out for guarding and such quests.
That said, I was glad that nothing happened, and I was grateful that I would be receiving money for just standing.
However, idling was in the end idling. It couldn't be helped.
Mowing the monsters down and stealing the skills all day long would feel more refreshing.

Standing straight didn't make me any stronger, it only hurt my back.

However, I had no right to complain because I was the one to accept the quest…

「——Excuse me, Marita-sama. The lunch is ready.」

Logins-san showed up after a knock.

「I'll eat in my room today. Can you please bring it in here?」
「Very well. I will have a quick meal prepared for Seiji-san and Lim-san, too…」
「Ah, thank you, but we brought our food with us.」

To tell you the truth——it was Dario-san's special bento [lunch box].
The moment I *ukiuki* excitedly unwrapped it, Marita, who was looking our way curiously, walked up to us.

「This… looks very appetising… Let me have a bite.」
「Hey, wai——」

Before I could finish my words, Marita had snatched my bento and bitten into it.
That behaviour was hardly befitting a princess.
I mean… Why is this kid taking more than a bite?

——…What… is the meaning of this?
In an instant, my bento was miraculously all gobbled up.

「No, umm, it was so delicious, so I… sorry…」

With sad eyes, I looked at the bento which Lim was grabbing.
I can have a bite, at least…
However, Lim started eating without meeting my eyes——Not just that, at an even faster speed?!

「Umm, the lunch which I was supposed to eat, Seiji——」

With my head still drooped, I nodded to Marita's proposal. I had obtained a lunch that would surely be delicious and luxurious. Still… Don't you think…?

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 14.2

2nd Volume, 14th Chapter【The Designated Quest】2nd Part

——Afterward, there was nothing special——It was calm and peaceful.
I downed the black tea, which Logins-san brought, *guit* in one gulp. The black tea here was as delicious as ever.
When a florid scent tickled my nose, I turned my sight around.
N? Lim, who would always relish its flavour, wasn't trying it out today…

「There's… some kind of smell…」
「Really? I can't sense it at all.」

Upon Lim's words, Marita held herself back from drinking it and tried to notice the smell.
Seriously? Has it expired? It tasted delicious, though.

「…The tea may have gone stale… I'll have it replaced right away. By the way, how was the lunch today, Marita-sama?」
「Ehehe, to tell you the truth, I exchanged it with Seiji's bento under a mutual agreement…」

The agreement was post exchange, though. She was just acting like a good kid in front of Logins-san.
Right after the gentle laughter resounded inside the room——I felt a sense of incongruity which I couldn't put my finger on.

——Something… was strange…
There was still some time till dusk, yet————

————Wasn't the mansion unusually quiet?
It was as calm… as midnight…

——The moment that question crossed my mind, the footsteps of someone running echoed inside the corridor.

Those presumptuous footsteps felt abnormal. I laid caution bare and whipped my sword out.
The air carried tension with it to Marita. The little girl held her breath and peeked.

——The next instant, the door as if kicked was thrown open. What appeared were——two suspicious people with their bodies clad in black mantles and their faces masked.
What's going on…? I mean, where are the guards…?

「Ooh, everyone really is asleep~ there can't be any job as easy as this.」
「You, can't you see a human moving in front of you? Secure the target right away. As for the obstacles… get rid of them…」

Asleep…? No, it's not the time to think about such things… Their target must be Marita.

They didn't seem to be friendly.

I tried to confirm the status of the enemy… but I couldn't…
Because their faces are hidden behind the masks?
It wasn't a skill that could see through someone hidden under cover. Since they had their faces completely hidden, it was impossible.

One of them, who was confirmed to be a woman from her voice, took a whip out.
What's that… Whip Arts…? Does such a Skill even exist?

——Calm down. I must concentrate on the enemy in front of me.
Unless I grasped a Skill, I couldn't steal it. So, there was no use in deliberating.
If I read the enemy's strengths with my own eyes——

————It would be my victory.

「Lim, protect Marita. I will keep them company.」

To test the ability of the enemy, you would throw your strongest piece. Because the objective of the enemy was not clear, Marita would have to kept away from damage.
…When I took a peek at Logins-san's status, he had fairly high combat skills. Therefore, I would be glad if he provided reinforcement. However, to keep Marita safe, I had to keep myself from being nearby her.

「Hey, hey. Does this guy… intend to take us on…?」
「You, too, get ready. Don't make light of your enemy, or you'll get into trouble.」

…I had been reduced to a guard… Adventurer was fine, too… However, what I always longed for was———a knight「……Naa!」

While spitting such words, I kicked the floor hard and bounded.
Although Marita's room was too big to live in————it was too good to fight in.
I ate the distance to the enemy completely and shook my sword off.
The target of my first attack was not the woman holding the whip——but the man next to her.

「Uoo——」

The man faintly groaned, but he caught the attack with the weapon which he already had set up underneath his mantle.
I see. So, the man's weapon was… twin swords, huh…?

Two somewhat long, somewhat short [swords]… geared with my sword at the last moment giving sparks off…
As for the strength, mine was higher… I would be able to press him…

「Wait… What's with this guy? Don't you think I should have known about this beforehand?」

If I lop one of his arms off, he would be neutralized, no…?

——?!

From the corner of my eye, I caught sight of a whip lashing at me. I dropped back dodging it barely.
The man chased me without a second thought and struck the twin swords down.

He was strong, certainly… but his sword line was rough compared to mine…
——Even though he had two swords, I would definitely come out on top!
With both of my hands firmly gripping the hilt of the sword, I caught the enemy's attack. By letting it slide over the sword fuller, I advanced one step forward.

「Fuu——」

I set my blade line up on the leverage point, where the enemy was clutching the sword at, and put all my power in.
One of the enemy's swords danced in the air and tumbled onto the floor with an unpleasant *gyugiii* metallic clank.

First one——down!
I swung the unedged [blunt] side of Noir down at the enemy's neck.
With just one sword left, he wouldn't be able to block it.

——However, the woman interrupted yet again.
It wasn't the whip, though. This time, something soared at me.
Springing to the side, I dodged it and breathed in.

Strangely… These two were cooperating, so it was inevitably difficult…
I wanted someone to help me a little, too.
But I had already said, 'leave it to me'… So, it would be difficult for me to ask for help now…

…Since the woman was interrupting again and again, I decided to tidy her up first.
Having switched the target to the woman, I dashed.

The woman, who had expected it midway through, held her hand up. Just like before, an object flew at me.
I had confirmed its nature last time.
It was an ice shot.
A Water Magic user… huh? It was easy to imagine ice through water…
However, its shape was the same as an icicle's. If it stuck into me, it wouldn't merely result in pain.

I was prepared, though. I invoked《Shield of Fire (Fire Shield)》which offset it. I advanced further.

After closing in this much… the sword would hold an advantage over the whip…

「Even magic——?!」

With the back of the sword, I hit the hand which she was wielding the whip in hard.
The sensation of fist bones fracturing transmitted to me. Even though healing was possible via Water Magic, she wouldn't be able to lash the whip for now.
The man screamed. He seemed to be invoking some magic. I thrust the sword at the woman's scruff.

「Don't move… Start explaining…」

I ordered the man to drop his weapon.

「——What are you guys doing——… What's the meaning of this?」

However, a newcomer barged into the room and spat those words out loud.
Without minding that I had the woman seized, he proceeded in our direction.
Shit… What do I do?

While unease was swelling up inside me, a reliable voice arrived from behind me.

「…I will take it over from here…」

It was Logins-san.
Thank god… Now Logins-san can take on the newcomer while I——

「——Ga……a」

Through the back of my defenseless head, an intense shock ran through.
Before I could even squeeze a word out, I collapsed onto the floor.
Eh… What… happened…?

Amidst faint consciousness, I lifted my eyes up.

What entered my sight————was Logins-san silently staring at me.

…What's the meaning of this…?
——I couldn't make sense of it…

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 15

Translated by mranon
Edited by OnionRings27

2nd Volume, 15th Chapter【The Echo】

Somehow, I held onto the consciousness that had almost dispersed. I tried to lift my body that had crumbled down onto the floor.
However, not only was my brain dominated by an all too familiar floating sensation, it was overwhelmed by nausea as if I was being pulled by gravity from every direction. Even so, I wouldn't let it have its way.
Is Logins-san associated with these suspicious guys?
…That's absurd…

I rethought with a little sanity that was left in me. My eyes hadn't gone that bad. Logins-san's affection toward Marita; Marita's trust in Logins-san. That relationship could by no means be a sham.
Even I, who hadn't been acquainted with them for long, could see that. It was such a warm and cozy relationship.
I couldn't imagine it being entirely an act… I couldn't imagine it at all…

「…How are these guys still not asleep? Even though I took great pains to arrange that medicine.」

The man of big stature, the one who entered the room last, spat these words from behind the mask.

「…Irregularities exist everywhere…」
「For someone like you, it was an unusually bad performance.」
「You're the same as ever… Serdio..」.
「After putting this matter to rest, I planned on returning to my former life. However, it seems to be impossible given the situation.」

The man called Serdio spread both of his arms and exhaled.

「It's an unnecessary thought. In any case, since I had the qualifications to serve here… I had no such thought to begin with…」

Logins-san…?

「Lo-Logins, what's the meaning of this? Explain!」
「Marita-sama… I apologize…」
「What… What do you mean 'I apologize'? I don't want to hear that!」

Shaking her head in denial of the reality unfurling before her eyes, Marita cried.
Although we couldn't make heads or tails of the situation either, the shock that Marita, who

had been under his care from back when she was a child, received would indeed be a big one. Her tiny slender legs, that could be peeked through the hem of her dress, were trembling.

「Marita! Run!」

The one who raised her voice in the midst of all that——was Lim.
She pulled Marita's hand and bolted to somehow escape to outside the room.
The woman, whom I injured, had yet to heal. Her partner, the man, was left with just one of his swords. If she had to pass through, it would be through there. Is that what she judged——?

Making full use of her flexible body, she lightly floated into the air and launched a roundhouse kick. Immediately, the woman took evasive action. The kick, however, grazed her temporal region and broke her stance.

「You…」

Enraged, the man next to her thrust the remaining sword out. Letting it slide over the back of her glove's padding, Lim diverted the trajectory. She drove the heel of her palm into the chin of enemy.

「Ouch… Captain!」

As she dashed through the cut open space, the man of big stature——Serdio, sneaked around to the front of the door.

「Get out… of my way!」

Leveraging the physical abilities of a beastkin, Lim reeled her front kick. However, the enemy dodged it by a hair's breadth.
She swung the kicked up heel down, but he guarded even that with crossed arms.
The next instant——the enemy mowed Lim's left leg, that had become her pivot leg, in order to trip her. Without having been afforded an opportunity to perform ukemi, she was knocked down onto the floor.

「Conceited lass…!」

「——Igu…u…a」

——He mercilessly slammed his fist into the collapsed Lim's abdomen.
Blood vomited out of her mouth and dyed the carpet crimson.

「What were you doing? Showing such a disgraceful sight in front of a beast.」
「M-Marita… run——」

Lim, who was extending her trembling hand to her friend, was punted in the head. She lost consciousness… Never to move again…

Don't… be kidding me…

「…Lend me your sword for a bit…」
「…Eh? What for?」

The woman, who bawled so, snatched the sword from the man and walked up to the unconscious Lim.

Stop… it… What do you plan on doing?
Amidst a sense of unease, I somehow stretched my hand to the tumbled over sword.

——The woman set the sword up right above Lim.

「This girl, how dare she…」
「Sto——」

The plea of someone like me, who could only crawl and scream, wouldn't accomplish anything. However, the woman's sword ceased; it never swung down.

「Don't kill people meaninglessly… Didn't you learn that…?」
「…I learnt from the captain to kill only if needed, but I have to kill her for my peace of mind…」

The eyes of the woman crossed with Logins-san's who was holding her arm back.

「——Stop.」

「……」

Upon Serdio's voice, the woman obediently lowered the raised sword.
Is this Serdio guy… their leader?
Logins-san… seems to hold a slightly different position from the other three. Going by his action just now, is he trying to keep us from getting killed…?
I didn't get it at all…

「——Withdraw.」

What resounded inside——was Marita's voice.
Holding the White Magic Crystal that was embedded in the pendant hanging on her neck out, she shouted at the intruders.
Approaching slowly toward Marita, who had a frozen expression about her face, was Logins-san.

「Marita-sama, please hand it over to me.」
「N-No! Withdraw, Logins… I-I'm serious…」
「…I don't mind getting killed by you…」
「No… Stop…」

——While Marita's face was *kushakusha* crumpled with tears, the White Magic Crystal was snatched away from her before she could invoke it. The hesitation the young girl felt toward the butler, whom she had trust in until now, could be understood.

What I didn't understand was——

「Alright… Get her.」
「N-No! …I'm scared… Help——Seiji, Lim… Logins… Why… Why are you doing this…」
「Wait…」

Marita was wailing.
Lim was hit hard; she had lost consciousness.
Dammit… Don't you be kidding me…

Stabbing the sword into the floor, I forcibly got my body up.

「Get away from Marita…!」
「Quite a strong guy. You guys don't have to be concerned. Quick, take her away. Put her to sleep, so she doesn't make noise.」

Nodding, the pair of subordinates dragged Marita.
When I tried to give them chase, Serdio and Logins-san intercepted me.

「Logins-san… Why are you doing this?」

——The one I couldn't comprehend was Logins-san.

「Seiji-san is truly honest——and kind. Even though you're in such a state, you're pointing your sword at me and asking me for the reason.」

After hesitating for a while, Logins-san was about to say something, but——

「Quickly shut this guy up. It's a waste of time.」
「…I guess…」

Serdio's words interrupted and broke the conversation down.
There was no room to hesitate for the current me. If I intended to kill an enemy of their level, I couldn't be halfhearted. I would have to go with all my power——
I grasped the sword tightly and howled at the enemy reflecting in my eyes that had yet to gain focus.

「U…ooooooooo!」

————————

————————

「——…When Marita-sama has returned safely, this will be turned over from Seiji-san…」

On the verge of losing consciousness, I heard such words. In the corner of my extremely dark oblong vision, I caught something——sparkling like a rainbow. It was a White Magic Crystal processed into a pendant. Marita’s pendant.

Read Riot Grasper Chapter 17

2nd Volume, 17th Chapter【Logins】

——When a rolled up paper had been fastened to the bird perched on a man's shoulder, it took off into the moonlit sky.
He had swarthy skin. His body was garbed in a mantle so black it blended into the twilight. However, the mask which should be concealing his face was at the moment not.

「Fuee~ I knew putting nothing on would feel refreshingly comfortable.」

The man——Ren, retreated inside the building while carefreely saying so. Under the guidance of dim moonlight, impinging through the crevice in the decayed stone wall, he trod along the pathway.

「Captain~ I have contacted with the guys on standby in the village. Tomorrow, they will rendezvous here with the necessary goods, I think——Eh… Sis Rei? Where's the captain?」
「Where that girl is asleep. By the way, you can't possibly have called every member here, have you?」
「Of course not. I have instructed a few of them to stay behind.」

Ren and Rei… were twins with identical features, but it was evident from their conversation that sister Rei held the superior position…

「Still, since the orphanage will soon have no use, isn't it wasteful to have them [masked men] stay there? If we threaten them [orphanage residents], they will keep quiet until our operation is over, I think.」
「It's for caution's sake. Even if they spilled the beans, no one would be able to find this place anyway. Also… a collar will be needed, so that guy doesn't try anything strange.」
「Waa, killing would be no good. It would be terrible.」
「There's no point in killing the hostage. We can play around, though, can't we?」
「Uwaa, Sis Rei is the last person to say that~ back when we were attacking, your killing intent was so bare, you even got scolded.」
「…Shut up…」
「No, no. I haven't even mentioned the resentment of dropping the candy, have I? Sis Rei has been spiteful since the olden days. Therefore, no matter how much time passes——Ah, I was of course kidding. Please do without that whip, or my flesh will end up torn.」

When Rei's hand girthed the whip on her waist, Ren bowed. Diverting the topic, he turned his gaze toward his sister and noticed her fist.

「Ah! Your hand has healed already? That's great.」
「Because I can use healing magic… It's not my forte, though…」
「So true~ …Ah, sorry… Still, back when we were fighting… there was a guy with the same hair color as us… Wasn't he too strong? How could he outpush both of us?」
「I don't know, either. He did seem to be from the same place as us, but the color of his skin was fair. I don't think he's from Togul.」

Souven Empire's history was imbrued with invading other nations for territory expansion. Togul was originally a small state situated in the east of the Empire. A few decades ago, it had been assimilated into the Empire. Now, it had merely been reduced to one of the 'places'. Ren and Rei were Togul natives. Their features slightly differed from those who lived in and around the Imperial Capital.

「I don't want to fight against a compatriot.」
「…That's irrelevant…」
「N~ and that guy who ambushed him… is just too much…」
「Exactly why I said that we need a collar.」

While scratching his head, Ren voiced another question.

「That guy——That butler, why has he tagged along? Even though he has no more business.」
「I have no idea. Because those two guards who were awake had witnessed the crime scene, he could not stay at the lord's mansion. Probably that's why? That said, why did he stop me from killing them… I don't get it…」
「The captain doesn't talk about him in detail either.」
「If you're so interested, why don't you ask the captain directly?」
「————Sis Rei… Let's ask together…」

————————

「N… u… here?」

Upon sensing incongruity from the corner of her eyes through to her cheeks, Marita, who had woken up, extended her finger.
The stains of dried up tears brought her memories back.

「——You have woken up, it seems.」
「Logins…」

Feeling rather wary than relieved upon the familiar voice, Marita, who was swollen with anger, raised her voice at the person next to her.
He was clad in the usual butler outfit. His gentle gaze wasn't any different from usual either.

「I will have you explain everything. Before that… Seiji and Lim are safe, right?」
「Probably. Those two were unaccounted for factors.」
「Why… Why did you do that?」
「When Marita-sama has been released safe and sound, I'll be gone. Therefore——「Didn't you hear what I said? Explain everything.」

The screaming voice of the girl, who had her shoulders quivering, echoed inside the room.

「…Very well… Before that, can you promise me one thing?」
「What?」
「After you have listened to the story… No matter what you think of me, you will allow me to stay by your side until you have been released.」

「What… are you saying?」
「Will you?」

After contemplating briefly, Marita nodded slightly. Having received the answer, Logins unhurriedly opened his mouth.

「I'll start off with the people who attacked the mansion. They're specially trained soldiers of a certain nation. Their principal function is espionage in other nations. Assassination and abduction of influential figures are incidental functions. This time, their objective is to disrupt the conclusion of the treaty between Lechelle Kingdom and the Western Archipelago States.」
「That… Ah, Logins, too… Someone close to Logins has been taken hostage, too, right? That's why you're being forced to——」
「I… guess… The root cause is different, though.」

The expression about Logins face indistinctly distorted. It was probably the fear of telling the girl the truth.

「————Originally, I was a member of that unit.」

With Marita unable to understand his words right away, silence pervaded the air.

「——Eh… Has Logins not always been a butler?」
「Yes, it has been a decade or so. I served in all sincerity nonetheless.」
「Lie… It's a lie… Right?」
「It's not. You should have already guessed as to which nation the unit belongs to, haven't you? I had long ago deserted that nation. Before a decade or so…」
「Tell me… everything…」

While sitting, Logins fiddled with the fingers of both his hands. With his head downcast, he started spinning his words.

「Marita-sama, I believe you were informed that the death of your mother was accidental.」
「I did hear so.」
「The truth is, she was abducted in the same manner as you now, Marita-sama… Thereby, she lost her life…」
「…Is that true?」
「That matter was concealed from general public because it could potentially develop into a war between the two nations.」
「Who… did that…」

At that question, Logins fell silent. His gaze drifted into the air as he murmured.

「Phylia-sama was an immensely bright and honest person. Even though she had been abducted, she talked to the people standing guard with a calm face. The orphanage she was raised in, her husband, the infant whom she had just given birth to, and so on. She only brought up the subjects that eased the lingering tension in the air.」
「Logins, you…」

「Talk with your enemy over shared values to evoke sentiments and draw negligence out——I was well aware of such a tactic, yet that person was free from such machinations… On the contrary, it extricated the air from malice.」

After briefly exhaling, Logins resumed where he left off from.

「——As you have already guessed, I… was part of the unit that executed the abduction of Phylia-sama…」

Thereafter, Logins narrated the actions which Phylia took on the brink of death.
Contrary to what she was given to understand by her father, her mother had taken her own life. How did Marita receive her mother's actions…? She didn't cry out loud; she continued to listen quietly…

「Even though my past was dyed with far more cruel acts, I was at a loss for what to do. Afterward, I ditched my nation and crossed over to Lechelle Kingdom——Whether I, being an orphan myself, was attracted to her circumstances, or I was attracted to her nature; I don't understand even now. However, the expression about her face on the verge of death had been etched in my mind. It just wouldn't fade.」

With his face covered in his palms, he shook his head.

「Even though I fabricated my status and changed my name to work under Albert-sama, the guilt had been committed to my memory; I could think of nothing but that.」

——'Please don't involve my family in this anymore'——

「…I don't think there's anything I can do to make up for that, but I want you to believe that the years I spent serving you were not a lie.」
「…Then, why are you doing this?」
「Does Marita-sama know a woman named Eleanor?」

Upon that enquiry, Marita *furufuru* shook her head.

「She grew up in the orphanage together with Phylia-sama. She [Phylia] loved her [Eleanor] just like a younger sister. 'She's [Eleanor] just like my family' …is what she [Phylia] said…」

In order not to get found out, Logins dispatched donations to the orphanage through merchants. However, as luck would have it, he was sniffed out and dragged into this.

「…That's karma…」
「What… All I have heard is how difficult it has been on you. My mother's dead; I'm in this state… Don't you think you are the one responsible, Logins?」
「……」

「You… Such cowardice against a kid. I don't know my mother in person… But I know you, who has been looking after me ever since I was a child, very well. It's… not about getting angry or not getting angry…」

Tears floated up in the corner of Marita's eyes. But she endured, so the tears wouldn't stream down her cheeks.

「——I thought you would cry and get angry.」
「…Did you think you could just apologize for her death?」
「Whatever you tell me to do, I will comply. However, can you please wait until you have been released safe and sound?」
「You're worried that I may take the same actions as my mother? I will be killed anyway if their demands are not met.」
「Why was Phylia-sama targeted…? I realized after serving for all these years. Albert-sama… will never forsake Marita-sama… That person is too soft. He cannot make a calm judgement. Therefore——」

Before he could finish his words, dry sound of a cheek being slapped echoed inside the room.

「…'Therefore' what? It's natural not to let someone you hold dear die. Father did nothing wrong.」
「True… So true…」

With her palm trembling, Marita's tears started spilling out.
The butler, however——kept on looking at her silently.

——Later, Marita went back to sleep after having gotten tired of crying.
Upon witnessing her state, Logins let a breath out. From a dark corner of the room, a man's voice resounded.

「You, who cannot abandon the guys at the orphanage… are plenty soft yourself…」

Black from head to toe, the man who showed up was——Serdio.

「You… seem to be diligently following what I taught you.」
「Use whatever can be used… even if it's your former teacher… Do you want me to respect your wishes? Well then, do your best and quietly babysit the princess, please.」

Author's note: Next time——『The Little Courage (tentative)』
Don't miss it.

mranon: Guys, I'm sorry to announce that I will be on a long break from tomorrow.
After enjoying NEET life for so long, I have found a new job.
I have to move to a different city in relation to the job.
I will need a lot of time to settle to the new city, then to the workplace, then to the work.
I will be away for at least a month. It may (most likely) go beyond that.
Riot Grasper and Science shall Prevail over Magic will be on break, too. I have no intention of dropping the series.
That's all.

See y'all soon™!

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